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THE INWARD LIGHT

THE INWARD LIGHT

A Drama in Four Acts

BY

ALLAN DAVIS AND ANNA R. STRATTON

"The reader will not fail to observe
frequent instances of two or more persons joining
in the composition of the same play (the
noble practice of those times)"

*From the Preface to "Specimens of
English Dramatic Poets" by Charles Lamb.*



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TO
JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER
FOR THE FAITHFULNESS AND BEAUTY
OF HIS WRITINGS

2081908

“ So much the rather thou Celestial Light
Shine inward. . . .”

JOHN MILTON,
“ Paradise Lost,” Book III

INTRODUCTION

The fire which destroyed the home of the late James A. Herne destroyed the only existing manuscript of "The Reverend Griffith Davenport," a play which to those of us who remember it from its too brief term on the stage seemed the first drama written about our Civil War on a sustained plane of spiritual seriousness worthy of the theme. Certainly such a play as "Secret Service" can hardly be recommended for spiritual seriousness, however theatrically effective it is — or was. Mr. Herne's play, as we recall it, was not a battle of wits, still less of guns, but of principles and moral passions. That may, perhaps, in part account for its failure in the theatre, where neither the causes nor the effects of war seem to intrigue the crowd, but only its romantic excitements. History, however, cannot be written by a record of romantic excitements, nor can historical drama. Furthermore, it is not in the physical action but in the spiritual and moral reaction that the true worth and beauty of any event is found, or its true measure of futility. It has been, unfortunately, a reproach of American drama that our stage over-emphasizes physical bustle, thus failing adequately to represent our history even when it makes the attempt; and, lacking an emphasis on things of the spirit, it lacks the depth of moral passion and the beauty of exaltation.

If only for these reasons, then, I have been greatly interested in reading "The Inward Light," for here is a drama in which, amidst an authentic setting of Pennsylvania Colonial (a Colonial that persisted in its purity

among the Friends long after the 19th century had forever rubbed off its bloom elsewhere), we find the terrible fact of the Civil War stabbing the hearts and consciences of high-minded men and women, by every instinct of heredity and training opposed to war; and by the very extent and passion of their reactions, we gain such a realization of the struggle, and all it meant to our fathers, as no display of uniforms, and spies, and captured telegrams, and off-stage musket fire, could possibly achieve. Moreover, because the play deals with deep, spiritual passions (and also because the characters are, with perfect propriety, allowed to use the language of the English Bible, instead of the patter of that monosyllabic person, "the man in the street"), we have here a sustained elevation of mood, a sense of exaltation and of beauty. We have a drama, in short, which in style and feeling is worthy of the great historical event one phase of which it exhibits, thus by implication illuminating the whole.

It will be quite apparent to the reader, however, that "The Inward Light" would hardly have been written, perhaps, had the world not been passing through a vaster war — a civil war, also, to those who dream the dream of the Federation of Nations! The tragedy of the individual conscience opposed to the world is an old one, it is poignant with drama, and has often been employed by the dramatists. Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People" is a case in point. But at no time, perhaps, is the tragedy so poignant as in the crisis of war, when mob passion is aflame, reason and kindliness and tolerance are dimmed, and, if the newspapers and orators are to be believed, conscience doth indeed "make cowards of us all" who oppose the herd. The pitiful and splendid figure of the old Quaker, David, in this play, sacrificing his fortune, his happiness, tearing out his heart and breaking it, rather than yield one jot of his convictions, standing tragically to the bitter end by his faith in his

religion of non-resistance, by his spiritual abhorrence of war, is a figure of noble proportions — it has something of the grand style only historical perspective, with its enlarging haze, can perhaps impart. Yet it is a figure that in a thousand variations can be in some sense duplicated in our day, and will be duplicated as long as mankind are capable both of warring on their fellows and of dreaming great dreams of peace. The relation of the individual to the state, the dual claims of society and conscience, are not argued in this drama. We have no idea from reading it what the convictions of the authors are. But they have so presented a moral conflict, a spiritual tragedy, conscience battling with happiness in the crisis of war, that we sense the depth and poignancy and everlasting dignity of such conflict and tragedy. They have shown, by implication, whatever worth war has must be sought in the ideals that inspire and, even more, that follow it, and the test of faith to be in that terrible conflict between comfort and conscience, between the world and the vision. It has been a sad indictment of us all these past few years that we have not treated convictions with respect when they ran counter to our own, that we have a little mislaid the profound regard for conscience which once was a cornerstone of our republic — or, at least, so we have been taught. It has been a sad indictment of our drama, too, that it has so persistently, and often so flashily, ignored the deeper things of the spirit. "The Inward Light" makes plain the heroic beauty of a true struggle of conscience, and hazards its all on a spiritual theme.

WALTER PRICHARD EATON

Twin Fires
Sheffield
Massachusetts.

THE INWARD LIGHT

Oh army-clad, our country, if again
The battle thunders where your banners stream,
The sons of Lincoln shall not fight in vain —
Led by the Great Emancipator's Dream.

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY
IN THE ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE

GLADIUS BROWN, David Worthington's butler, an ancient negro, formerly a slave.

JONATHAN LEWIS, fifty, Clerk of the Meeting.

MEHITABEL EVANS, twenty-five.

CALEB SCATTERGOOD, sixty-eight, Joseph Baring's uncle.

ISAAC PETTIGREW, fifty-two.

PRISCILLA BARING, seventeen, Joseph Baring's sister.

BENJAMIN WORTHINGTON, nineteen, David Worthington's son.

PETER ALDERMAN, forty-five, David Worthington's partner.

RACHEL WORTHINGTON, twenty-four, David Worthington's daughter.

DAVID WORTHINGTON, fifty-five, manufacturer, and advocate of Peace.

JOSEPH BARING, thirty-three, a member of the State Legislature.

HARMONY LIGHTFOOT, a little girl of seven, Joseph Baring's niece.

WILLIAM PENN LIGHTFOOT, a little boy of five, Joseph Baring's nephew.

KING SOLOMON, a rough-haired collie.

PLACE

Berks County, Pennsylvania.

TIME

1861

ACT I

The lawn before David Worthington's home.

The late afternoon of Seventh Day (Saturday), April 13, 1861.

ACT II

The living-room of the Baring home.

The evening of Fifth Day (Thursday), July 11.

ACT III

The drawing-room of the Worthington home.

Ten days later—the early evening of First Day (Sunday), July 21.

ACT IV

The Meeting House.

Ten days later—the afternoon of Fourth Day (Wednesday), July 31.

(Note on the dialogue: The younger people of the play use archaic and contemporary expressions interchangeably, depending on the person to whom they are speaking and the depth of their emotions. The older characters generally preserve more uniformity in their address.)

(The stage directions are from the point of view of the actor.)

ACT I

THE INWARD LIGHT

ACT I

SCENE: *The lawn before DAVID WORTHINGTON'S home in the late afternoon of Seventh Day, Saturday, April 13, 1861.*

The façade of a colonial mansion is seen at the left. The main entrance to the house is down stage. It is a mahogany door beneath a small portico of slender Ionic columns, forming a hooded space, or stoop, from which a few steps, with an iron scroll railing of delicate workmanship, lead to the ground. On the outer side of both of the iron railings, a hedge has been trained to follow their elevation up to the house. Above the steps in the wall are two fine, small-paned windows with semi-circular tops. Along the back is a brick and sandstone fence, higher than a man's head, largely covered with Virginia creepers, which encloses the grounds. Parallel to the fence on the outer side is supposed to be the roadway. At the centre of the fence, an iron gate of the same delicate workmanship as the scroll railings of the steps opens onto the lawn.

Outside on the roadway, just at the left of the gate, is a notably fine scarlet oak. A great limb of it extends over the fence and above part of the lawn at the rear. Elms dot the well-kept grounds to the right, with clumps of shrubs marking the paths between them. Beside the steps, on their upper side, is an old lilac bush almost as large as a small tree. Nearer the centre is a sun-dial of weathered pink marble. A gorgeously budding red maple is near the front of the stage at the right of the centre. Beneath its branches a semi-

circular tree-bench curves on either side of the trunk. Carelessly draped on the back of the bench is a Persian shawl. In front of the bench is an embroidery stand with two chairs, left and right respectively. Farther to the left of the bench is a patriarchal rustic arm-chair.

The grounds are exquisite in their stillness and the pale apple-green and vermillion of early foliage. They denote the hand of loving care and the dignity of a fine simplicity. It is the home of a rich man whose possessions are his servants, not his master; and it bespeaks a character of austere and lofty serenity.

The sunlight falls in mottled splashes of golden light and shade upon the ground. Occasionally fleecy clouds passing overhead vary the position of the shadows and the spaces of light.

As the curtain rises the stage remains empty for a few moments while the song of a cardinal floats up sweetly from the trees at the right. Then the door of the house opens, and GLADIUS BROWN, DAVID WORTHINGTON'S butler, comes out upon the stoop. His garments are a Prince Albert coat, waistcoat and trousers, not well-fitting but clean, and his linen is spotless. He has a meek, careworn face. His hair and straggling Moorish beard are tinged with grey. For a moment he stands silent as if tranced by the singing and serenity, his bent form straightening out in the slanting ray of amber sunlight that rests upon him. Then he comes down the steps of the house onto the lawn, and crosses to the tree-bench at the right of the centre, where he secures the shawl and lays it over his arm.

As he turns as if to go back to the house, JONATHAN LEWIS enters from the gate at the back. He is a short, stoutish man with a florid complexion, and the manner of one who enjoys living. His voice is rich and full as becomes a clerk of the Meeting. He is clad in the customary garb of the Friends, a long, black, single-breasted

coat which is collarless, long dark trousers, and a broad, flat-brimmed felt hat.

JONATHAN [*as he comes down towards the centre*]. Ah, Gladius.

GLADIUS [*left of centre*]. Ah trust yo' finds yo'self well, Marse Lewis.

JONATHAN [*kindly*]. Not Master Lewis, Gladius. Just Jonathan. The mode of address among the Friends is by the first name only.

GLADIUS. Yassah, Marse David he done tole me so. But Ah fergits. Ah asks yo' pardon.

JONATHAN. Is David at home?

GLADIUS. No, sah. Miss Rachel she say he comin' soon wif Marse Joseph.

JONATHAN [*moving to the tree-bench*]. I'll wait for him here.

GLADIUS. Kin Ah git yo' anything, Marse Lewis?

JONATHAN [*smiling*]. No, I thank thee, Gladius. [*He sits down on the bench.*]

GLADIUS. Yassah, Marse Lewis.

[GLADIUS goes up the steps. As he reaches the landing, the door opens from within, and MEHITABEL EVANS comes out upon the stoop. She is twenty-five, a comely slender woman with the arched, distant gaze of the imaginative and visionary. Her garb is the full skirt and simple bodice of the customary Quaker dress, its fabric of soft grey silk.]

MEHITABEL [*considerately to the old man*]. Rachel was asking for thee, Gladius.

GLADIUS. Yass'm, Ah has her shawl. [*He goes into the house.*]

MEHITABEL [*catching sight of JONATHAN*]. Jonathan.

JONATHAN [*rising as she comes down the steps, but not removing his hat*]. How does thee do, Mehitabel? David's not home, I understand.

MEHITABEL. No, but Rachel expects him momentarily with Joseph.—I could not remain indoors for thinking of the bombardment. Has thee heard anything more?

JONATHAN [*optimistically*]. No. But Sumter's impregnable, and the reinforcements must have arrived.

MEHITABEL. Thirty-six hours! How will it end?

JONATHAN. Thee must be patient, Mehitabel. He who hath in His keeping the fall of a sparrow and the destiny of nations will order all rightly.

[CALEB SCATTERGOOD enters at the gate. *He is a man of about sixty-eight, his hair a silvery grey. Time and trial and his own heart have made him mellow and humane without impairing his whimsical simplicity. He is a figure of dignity and charm with a quiet humour. He also is clad in the customary garb of the Friends, but more richly and finely than JONATHAN.*]

MEHITABEL [*left of centre*]. Ah, Caleb.

CALEB [*coming down centre*]. I am glad to see thee, Mehitabel. [*Seeing JONATHAN.*] And thee, Jonathan. Only Isaac is lacking to make up the number of our committee.

JONATHAN. Let us await him here. David has not yet arrived.

CALEB. Does thee think the price offered for the Meeting House property is adequate?

JONATHAN. I do not know. But David will when he comes.

MEHITABEL [*to Caleb*]. Thee does not apprehend much trouble in putting down the rebellion?

CALEB [*gravely*]. The South has taken the other forts without a struggle. Sumter is the first to offer resistance.

MEHITABEL. David believes that compromise may win, and war be averted.

CALEB [*dubiously*]. Joseph is not so sure.

JONATHAN [*thoughtfully*]. And Joseph is nearer the heart of things.

CALEB. Ay, his position in the Legislature brings him into touch with the leaders.

MEHITABEL. His father's mantle has surely fallen on Joseph.

CALEB [*sweetly*]. To tell the truth, Mehitabel, sometimes I wonder if that splendid young man can be the nephew of such a barren stock as I.

JONATHAN. Joseph will carry the standard of the Friends to a loftier height than even David has borne it.

CALEB. Ay, when I see David and Joseph together, it seems to me as if the past of the Friends were walking arm in arm with their future.

[*From the door of the house enters PRISCILLA BARING, a lovely young girl of seventeen with hair of golden chestnut. Her costume is more Worldly than Quaker: cream-coloured crepe tinged with pale lavender, and worn over an expansive crinoline. Her manner likewise hovers between the two schools, at times quaintly sedate and at times quite elfin or buoyantly extravagant.*]

PRISCILLA. Well, Uncle Caleb!

CALEB [*looking up at her as she stands on the stoop*]. Well, Priscilla?

PRISCILLA. Is thee glad to see me? And is thee very proud of thy Priscilla in all the glory of her Worldly apparel?

CALEB. No, I am not. Thee is an ugly duckling.

PRISCILLA [*skipping down the steps and running over to him*]. I dare thee to say before these witnesses that thee does not love me very much. [*She throws her arms around his neck.*] [*To MEHITABEL and JONATHAN.*] Watch him closely.

CALEB [*scandalized*]. Release me, abandoned child!

PRISCILLA. Not until thee kiss me.

CALEB [*firmly*]. Never.

The Inward Light

PRISCILLA. Then will I kiss thee. [*She does so to the amusement of MEHITABEL and JONATHAN.*]

CALEB [*holding her in his arms a moment — tenderly*]. Thee is a froward female.

PRISCILLA [*to MEHITABEL*]. Rachel hath sent me for thee. Are thy fears about Sumter at rest, oh Mistress Calamity?

MEHITABEL. Do not be so annoying, Priscilla.

PRISCILLA [*to the two men*]. Really she quite upset Rachel and me and the children and even King Solomon.

JONATHAN. Who is King Solomon?

PRISCILLA. Our new collie dog. [*They laugh.*] What is the latest news?

MEHITABEL. There is none.

PRISCILLA. There! I told thee! — I shall rejoin Rachel. For of a surety I must not leave those angel darlings and that heavenly canine.

[*As she runs lightly up the steps ISAAC PETTIGREW enters at the gate. He is a tall man and, unlike CALEB, and much unlike JONATHAN, is reserved in manner almost to austerity. The singleness of his belief, notwithstanding, makes him a figure to be respected. He also wears the Quaker garb, although he is not so carefully attired as CALEB.*]

ISAAC [*addressing no one in particular*]. Is David at home?

PRISCILLA. Nay, Isaac. Like most wise men he stays away from home as much as possible.

CALEB. Pray overlook my niece's levity, Isaac. The three of us will wait on David together.

[*Off-stage is heard string music and a song of commingled voices, soft and sweet in the quiet afternoon.*]

MEHITABEL. What's that?

PRISCILLA. Some strolling gipsies who have been flavouring this sour neighbourhood with their sweet music.

CALEB. Spring brings them forth like the bluets or anemones. [*He takes some coins from his pocket, and goes toward the gate.*]

JONATHAN [*surprised*]. Is thee going to reward them?

ISAAC. Encouraging the vagabonds!

CALEB [*whimsically*]. Even artists must live. [*He goes to the gate and speaks off-stage.*] Here ye are, my friends.

A STRONG MUSICAL VOICE [*off-stage*]. Thank you, saire — thank you — we com' back, an' play some more.

CALEB. Nay, nay, we're Friends, and I'm supposed to drive thee away. [*The voices off-stage laugh.*]

THE FIRST VOICE. The gentleman mak' fun. We com' back. [*They go away singing and playing. The music gradually dies away in the distance.*]

ISAAC [*as CALEB comes back to the centre*]. Thee inclines too much to the World.

CALEB [*quizzically*]. Well, Isaac, one righteous man would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah, and I depend upon thee! [*ISAAC turns away stiffly.*]

MEHITABEL [*to mollify him*]. Whence did thee come, Isaac?

ISAAC. From Amity.

CALEB. Has the station-master any more news?

ISAAC. Nay, there seems to be an interruption in the telegraph wires.

MEHITABEL [*anxiously*]. The uncertainty!

PRISCILLA [*more seriously*]. Indeed, Mehitabel, thee *will* succeed in making me uneasy.

ISAAC [*meaningfully*]. The very times breed painful occasions.

JONATHAN [*quickly*]. Has anything happened? [*ISAAC nods.*]

CALEB. What was it?

ISAAC [*his manner very serious*]. I have just seen

the son of David Worthington carrying a musket.

MEHITABEL [*surprised*]. Benjamin?

ISAAC. Ay. In the public square — drilling.

MEHITABEL AND JONATHAN [*shocked*]. Drilling!

ISAAC. With the cadets.

JONATHAN [*distressed*]. A birthright Friend bearing arms!

CALEB [*thoughtfully*]. This will be a blow to his father.

ISAAC [*sincerely*]. David should be informed.

PRISCILLA [*with unexpected womanliness, yet in a respectful tone*]. Bad news travels fast enough, Isaac, without speeding it.

CALEB [*to her — positively*]. For once I agree with thee. [*Admonishingly to the others.*] Keep this matter to yourselves.

[*An attractive lad of nineteen suddenly swings into view on the limb of the scarlet oak, which projects over the fence from the back. He is BENJAMIN WORTHINGTON, — an eager-spirited, fawn-eyed boy. His Friends' coat is on his arm, and his hat is in his hand.*]

BENJAMIN [*on the limb of the tree — blithely*]. To all assembled here, greeting!

MEHITABEL. Benjamin!

BENJAMIN. What's the meeting about? Like the World's People, I sit in the gallery.

CALEB [*whimsically*]. Benjamin, thee almost persuades me there is something in these astonishing new theories of Charles Darwin.

BENJAMIN [*puzzled*]. Who's he, Caleb?

CALEB [*dryly*]. An English scientist who believes there's some relation between man and monkey. [*Benjamin laughs.*]

JONATHAN [*kindly*]. Are such antics seemly, my lad?

BENJAMIN. When April's in the air, and the blue-

birds coming? [*Mischievously to JONATHAN.*] Jonathan, has thee never been uplifted by the stars of spring?

JONATHAN. Well, not quite so high, Benjamin, I will admit.

BENJAMIN [*to ISAAC*]. Now thee has been up a tree in thy time, Isaac, I'll wager. [*ISAAC walks away a step without answering. BENJAMIN chuckles.*]

CALEB. It's a long time since if any of us were, Benjamin. But let us discourse of it where we shall all be on the same level.

PRISCILLA. Do come down, Benjamin.

BENJAMIN [*with a great show*]. Since the lady asks it — though I am a Friend, a gallant heart beats in this antique bosom. [*He leaps to the ground.*]

CALEB [*to BENJAMIN*]. May I exercise the prerogative of an old man?

BENJAMIN [*mischievously*]. I am humbly prepared for thy reproof.

CALEB. What if thy father had seen thee drilling?

BENJAMIN [*with a sly look*]. It was almost as bad, for Isaac did.

ISAAC. A Friend to carry a gun!

BENJAMIN [*smilingly*]. I might shoot it, too.

JONATHAN [*serious, but without fanaticism*]. How can thee jest of a thing so contrary to our principles?

BENJAMIN [*soberly*]. I wasn't old enough to vote for Lincoln last Fall, but I can do something more than that for him now.

PRISCILLA [*ecstatically*]. Oh, if they only gave women the vote!

CALEB. Such ideas! — Peace, thee wild Amazon!

BENJAMIN [*brightly*]. Wait till I'm a soldier.

MEHITABEL. A member of the Society of Friends!

BENJAMIN [*charmingly*]. Mehitabel! I don't know whether I'm a Friend or not.

CALEB [*gently*]. The times are indeed troubled when David Worthington's own flesh and blood does not know whether he is his father's son.

BENJAMIN [*firmly*]. Must we always be what our fathers and grandfathers were, and do what they did?

ISAAC [*with dignity*]. Ay, if we are to live in their faith.

BENJAMIN [*winsomely, if firmly, to him*]. I would be my own architect, Isaac.

[PETER ALDERMAN *enters at the gate, whistling. He is a man of forty-five, gaily dressed in a blue cutaway coat, a figured silk waistcoat, and buff nankeen pantaloons. He wears a high collar, a cravat with loose ends, and a heavy watch chain with many seals. He is gloved, carries a cane, and all in all affords a brilliant and startling contrast to the severe style of the Friends.*]

ALDERMAN [*as he enters, genially*]. Hello, everybody. Hello, Bennie, my lad. Your daddy home yet?

BENJAMIN. Not that I know, Peter. Weren't you at the works?

ALDERMAN. Yes, but left early. [*To the others.*] D'you know today my mild partner was cross at my whistling?

CALEB. David?

ALDERMAN [*enjoying the humour of it*]. Yes. He's always endured it in a sort of way, protesting but accepting it as one of the peculiarities of us World's People. But this time he gave me *one* look, and I — scooted!

[*They laugh.*]

BENJAMIN. Any more news about Sumter?

ALDERMAN [*drawing off his gloves, holding his cane under his arm*]. Only that it was still holding out.

BENJAMIN [*with proud satisfaction*]. They'll never take it.

JONATHAN [*to ALDERMAN*]. Does thee think this matter serious?

ALDERMAN [*with a change of tone*]. Every cannon-shot is a peal of terrible bells waking up our sleeping nation.

BENJAMIN [*eagerly*]. They're stirring now. Can't you feel it, all of you? Like young lions they rouse themselves.

CALEB [*mildly*]. Do ealm thyself, Benjamin.

ALDERMAN. The boy's right. We must adjust our lives and business without delay to the work in hand. I really must see David.

[*The door of the house opens, and RACHEL WORTHINGTON comes into view on the landing. She is a young woman of twenty-four. The sheer white dress which she wears, although it conforms somewhat to the Friends' garb in style, has about it a touch of the world of the day, and like PRISCILLA she wears no cap. Her speech has distinction and charm, and the dark beauty of her hair and the fashioning of her features and her hands make her look as exquisite as the cameo which she wears on her bosom.*]

CALEB [*catching sight of her*]. The blessing of this beautiful day be upon thee, Rachel.

RACHEL. And upon thee, Caleb, and all. [*To BENJAMIN.*] Father and Joseph not yet returned?

BENJAMIN [*who has moved up to the steps*]. No, sister.

RACHEL [*to all*]. They must have been delayed. Will ye come in?

CALEB. It is wondrously soft out-doors. Let us stay here.

RACHEL. Let me make you welcome until father comes. [*She comes down the steps onto the lawn, smiling to PRISCILLA.*] I sent thee for Mehitabel, and I have

had to come for thee. [*To MEHITABEL.*] Well, Mehitabel, has thy curiosity been appeased? [*To the others.*] She *would* leave us to see what news was afoot, and look what a goodly company she hath attracted.

MEHITABEL [*miffed*]. Indeed that was not my purpose, Rachel.

RACHEL [*flutteringly to her*]. Forgive me, dear Mehitabel.— I suppose ye were discussing the Crisis.

ALDERMAN. Yes.

RACHEL [*dubiously*]. Father treats it as a disturbance that will soon pass by.

CALEB [*kindly*]. Let us hope so.

RACHEL [*troubled*]. He has given his whole life to the cause of peace, and it would go hard if his hopes were shattered.

THE VOICE OF A YOUNG MAN OFF-STAGE (JOSEPH). Senator Sumner has already carried one to the Congress from the Friends of Massachusetts.

THE VOICE OF AN OLDER MAN OFF-STAGE (DAVID). Ay, Joseph, it is time the Pennsylvania Friends also sent a Memorial to the President.

RACHEL. There he is now. [*She moves to the gate as DAVID and JOSEPH enter.*]

[DAVID WORTHINGTON is a man of fifty-five, with a countenance that Rembrandt would have delighted to paint. His face, though at times stern in repose, lights up with feeling when he speaks. There is in him a humour and kindness coupled with enormous strength of will and conviction.]

[JOSEPH BARING is thirty-three, tall, in the full vigour of young manhood, with strong and handsome features.]

[Both men are dressed in the Friends' garb. JOSEPH's is less pronounced than DAVID's. His coat has a collar of velvet and lapels, and he wears a linen collar with a black stock. A warm affection exists between the two

men as is shown in their manner toward one another.]

RACHEL [*going swiftly to DAVID*]. Father.

DAVID [*drawing her tenderly toward him. She is obviously the apple of his eye, but the habits of a lifetime do not permit him to be highly expressive in terms of endearment*]. Daughter. [*Lovingly to BENJAMIN — at his left.*] Sonny.

RACHEL. Thee is past thy hour today. I was becoming anxious.

DAVID [*to the others*]. Ye see what a gentle gaoler I have.

JOSEPH [*at DAVID's right*]. It was my fault, Rachel. I detained him talking.

PRISCILLA [*crossing to JOSEPH, and putting his right arm round her*]. I can well believe it, thee windy politician.

DAVID [*affectionately laying his hand on JOSEPH's arm*]. Nay, Priscilla, it was I detained thy brother. [*PRISCILLA and RACHEL join hands and move up right back.*] [*To the others with much solemnity.*] I have had a deep concern on my heart for weeks. I cannot sleep because of it. The matter has grown on me. In the silences of the night it has laid hold of me and oppressed me. [*Turning to ALDERMAN.*] Peter, thee does not think that this cloud on the horizon will grow larger than a man's hand?

ALDERMAN [*seriously*]. You have always enjoined me to talk plainly, David.

DAVID. Of course.

ALDERMAN. I think it is the cloud of civil war.

DAVID [*passionately*]. Then it must not break.

JOSEPH. The world has not yet recovered from the Crimea.

DAVID [*almost in lamentation*]. Ay, smoke still rises from the ruins of Sebastapol, mute witness to the car-

nage of war. With that before us, surely we cannot plunge into another such sacrifice of human life.

JOSEPH. That alone should be enough to stay the hand of violence.

DAVID. The land cries for peace. We must memorialize the President.

JONATHAN. I agree. Abraham is our only hope.

ISAAC. 'Tis time we urged the principle of non-resistance more emphatically.

CALEB. The sending of reinforcements to Sumter and Fort Pickens gives us strong pretext for renewed protest against possible war.

JOSEPH. I am of thy opinion, Uncle Caleb, and it is fit that such protest start here in Berks County, whence the President's forebears went a few generations ago.

MEHITABEL. It might have more weight with him.

JOSEPH [*dubiously*]. Although Lincoln is slow to act . . .

DAVID. How could he be otherwise with his ancestry? Friends do not act until they see their way clear. Abraham cannot push the war. He must not.

BENJAMIN [*abruptly*]. Yet he fought in the Black Hawk war.

DAVID [*looking steadfastly and very fondly at BENJAMIN*]. Ay, my son. But Abraham is older now. Life is spendthrift when thee's young. but grows more precious with years.

MEHITABEL. And Peace is the halo round its brow.

DAVID. The Friends are not so numerous as the World's People, but if we stand firmly together on the cardinal principle of our faith — Peace — we shall render a service to the people of our day out of all proportion to our numbers.

ISAAC [*with exalted voice*]. The Lord hath sent us to witness against all violence.

ALDERMAN. If the preservation of a country makes

war necessary, horrible as it is, we must pay the penalty.

DAVID [*with iron firmness*]. It is never necessary. Man's folly alone brings it on.

JOSEPH [*with the far look of the idealist*]. The light of the Spirit cannot be quenched, David.

DAVID. Nay, that alone remains whatever man can do. [*Meekly, yet with a kind of pride, his frame uplifted.*] And in that inward light I live.

CALEB [*in the same tone*]. As do all Friends.

ISAAC AND JONATHAN. Ay.

MEHITABEL. Ay.

DAVID [*in a businesslike tone*]. Think the matter over then, and if ye be moved of the Spirit to speak at the next Monthly Meeting we shall discuss it.

[PRISCILLA and RACHEL have moved over to just above the steps where MEHITABEL joins them.]

JONATHAN [*with CALEB and ISAAC coming to DAVID at the centre*]. Regarding the sale of the Meeting House property . . .

DAVID [*courteously*]. Step into the house. I will presently join you.

[ALDERMAN whistles a few bars of "Yankee Doodle."]

ISAAC [*reprovingly as he passes ALDERMAN*]. Thy whistling is ill-timed.

CALEB [*to ALDERMAN, smiling*]. May thee keep thy exuberance of spirit in the times to come.

ALDERMAN [*to JOSEPH*]. Your Uncle Caleb is a humane old boy, isn't he? [*He and JOSEPH draw to the right, conversing together.*]

DAVID [*to MEHITABEL, while CALEB, JONATHAN and ISAAC walk up the steps and go into the house*]. Has Rachel showed thee the plants which Captain Slocum brought me from Charleston?

RACHEL [*with her arms round the waists of the other girls*]. Magnolias — beauties —

MEHITABEL [*as they move to the upper end of the house*]. Thy house will be embowered in perfume.

PRISCILLA. How I do love and adore flowers! [*The three girls, chatting, go off stage at the upper left.*]

DAVID [*centre — to BENJAMIN*]. Come hither, my lad. [*BENJAMIN goes to him. The boy's attitude is one of love and respect, but with reservations on points of principle.*] My son, will thee forgive the solicitude of a father to whom thee is — very dear?

BENJAMIN [*looking up with shining eyes*]. W-what is it, father?

DAVID. I am worried over thee, Benjamin.

BENJAMIN [*quickly*]. Has Isaac said anything to thee?

DAVID. Isaac? Nay. Why should he?

BENJAMIN [*relieved*]. I was only wondering.

DAVID [*tenderly*]. I desire to speak to thee not because another has approached me, but because of the uneasiness that stirs in my own heart. [*Pause.*] All the lads are joining the cadets. They're urging thee, I'm afraid. The seriousness of thy manner troubleth me. My boy, thee will never do aught that would bring most deep unhappiness to thy father?

BENJAMIN [*ambiguously — with quivering lips*]. I shall have thee in mind, father, whatever I do.

DAVID [*misunderstanding — gratefully*]. That is well, my boy.

BENJAMIN. May I ride Black Jess to the village?

DAVID [*smilingly*]. Is it possible for thee to keep off that horse?

BENJAMIN. I am anxious to hear whether any news has come in.

DAVID [*lovingly*]. Go, my son, and may it be good news.

[*BENJAMIN with a lingering look of love clouded by a sense of difference goes off stage at the upper end of*

the house on the left. A moment later his horse's hoofs are heard fading in the distance.]

ALDERMAN [*noticing that BENJAMIN has gone off stage comes down to DAVID*]. David.

DAVID [*to ALDERMAN*]. Did thee wish to speak with me, Peter?

ALDERMAN. Yes. [*JOSEPH turns as if to leave up-stage right.*]

DAVID. Nay. Joseph, stay. Thee knows my whole thought. [*To ALDERMAN.*] Unless it be confidential?

ALDERMAN. Not at all. [*He draws up a chair, right of centre, in which he sits. JOSEPH sits on a chair to his left, a little above him. DAVID faces them in the large rustic arm-chair a little to the left of the centre.*] We've been partners for many years, David.

DAVID. Ay; and thy father was the partner of my father, and thy grandfather of my grandfather almost from the time this Commonwealth was founded.

ALDERMAN. We've been World's People and you Quakers. Yet we've always managed to get along together.

DAVID [*enjoying his little joke*]. Do not forget, Peter, we Friends can get along with anybody. We even got along well with the Indians.

ALDERMAN [*after the laughter*]. Well, to the point: we've had to lay off many workmen in the last few months.

DAVID. To my great regret.

ALDERMAN. I've been thinking we could take them back, and have employment for hundreds more.

DAVID [*looking up serenely*]. What is thy wish?

ALDERMAN [*after a pause*]. To enlarge the works.

JOSEPH [*surprised — to ALDERMAN*]. Have you been receiving more orders than you can fill?

ALDERMAN. No. But we could.

DAVID [*benignly*]. Thy words say one thing, thy thought another. Come, deal simply with me.

ALDERMAN [*measuring his words*]. David, I want to be ready for government contracts.

DAVID. Of what kind?

ALDERMAN [*slowly*]. Uniforms for the army.

DAVID [*slowly but kindly*]. I cannot favour it, Peter.

ALDERMAN. But this is not taking up arms.

DAVID [*with childlike trust*]. It is simple business. The government will not go so far that an armed force will be needed. Then we should be bankrupt.

JOSEPH [*meditatively*]. But if war should come, and armies be raised by tens and hundreds of thousands?

ALDERMAN. Exactly. They will need uniforms. And who can supply them so well as we?

DAVID [*painfully*]. I don't like the idea of riches gained through others' misery.

ALDERMAN. We can double, treble our capital, take back all the men we've had to lay off, and make room for hundreds of others.

DAVID [*his voice trembling with emotion*]. All my life I've dreamed of Peace. Could I reap the profits gained from war, even though that profit be shared with those who so sorely need it?

ALDERMAN. Joseph, what do you think?

JOSEPH [*musingly — to DAVID*]. There is much in what Peter says, both from the point of view of your business, your workmen, and of the needs of the men in the field — always supposing there should be war.

ALDERMAN [*with firm politeness, rising*]. I want to be in a position to try for those contracts.

DAVID [*rising — with serene power*]. I am unwilling to entertain the idea. [JOSEPH rises.]

ALDERMAN. I'm sorry.

DAVID [*benignantly*]. This will not bring division between us?

ALDERMAN [*very seriously*]. Your refusal will deeply trouble me, I am afraid.

[*A strained pause.—At this moment MEHITABEL, RACHIEL, and PRISCILLA appear from the upper corner of the house.*]

PRISCILLA [*to DAVID as they come down stage*]. Thy plants are exquisite, David.—Cones of red flame tapering into snow.

MEHITABEL. I begrudge me that I cannot allow myself more time to enjoy their perfections.

ALDERMAN [*to MEHITABEL and PRISCILLA*]. May I offer you my escort, ladies?

MEHITABEL. It will be a pleasure, Peter.

PRISCILLA. As soon as I can get Harmony and William Penn.

[*ALDERMAN has joined MEHITABEL and they go up-stage.*]

JOSEPH [*crossing to the left*]. I'll bring them, sister. [*He walks up the steps and into the house.*]

RACHIEL [*to PRISCILLA*]. Let me give you these pancies, Priscilla, the first of the season. [*She pins them on PRISCILLA's bodice.*]

DAVID [*pinching PRISCILLA's cheek*]. Flowers are pretty, but youth needs not even that decoration. I like the plain dress of the Friends. It leaves more time for the adornment of the mind.

RACHIEL [*smilingly*]. But we are women, father, with a besetting fondness for new frocks.

DAVID [*sweetly*]. Set not your heart on things that are fleeting, my child. Thee knows the history of the garb of the Friends. The style of my coat and hat is that which was used generally in the time of Charles the First, only the king's coat was of satin, he stole it from the silkworm; the feather for his hat he borrowed from the ostrich. We have continued to wear the garments of that day, but without adornment. And such

as they were, they have remained two hundred years. [*Humorously.*] Methinks the Friends would feel uncomfortable in some of the styles of today.

PRISCILLA [*poutingly*]. Well, thee need not look so cross at me. [DAVID *laughs.*]

[JOSEPH comes out upon the landing with HARMONY LIGHTFOOT, a little girl of seven quaintly dressed as a Friend except that her pantalets show beneath her skirts, and WILLIAM PENN LIGHTFOOT, a little boy of five, also clad as a Friend. Behind them on a lead held by GLADIUS is KING SOLOMON, a magnificent specimen of the sable and white rough-haired collie.]

DAVID [*lifting HARMONY down from the stoop while JOSEPH comes down the steps and places little WILLIAM PENN in a standing position on the rustic arm-chair.*] Well, has thee enjoyed thy customary Seventh Day visit, Harmony?

HARMONY [*with comical gravity*]. Ay, David.

DAVID [*fumbling in his coat-tail pockets*]. I have a surprise for thee, William Penn. [*He draws out a beautiful glass sphere about two inches in diameter which he gives to the little lad.*]

WILLIAM PENN. A manny!

DAVID. And this is for Harmony. [*From the other pocket he takes out a small package which he begins to unwrap.*]

HARMONY [*sedately*]. I cannot contain myself for curiosity. [*The others laugh.*]

DAVID [*as he removes the last piece of paper and a small doll is disclosed*]. There!

HARMONY [*in ecstasy*]. A dolly!

JOSEPH. What does thee say, Harmony?

HARMONY [*clasping her doll tightly in one arm and holding her skirt with the other hand makes a courtesy*]. Thank'ee, David.

JOSEPH. And thee, William Penn?

WILLIAM PENN [*indifferently*]. Fanks.

DAVID [*patting KING SOLOMON who is held on the lead by GLADIUS*]. I am sorry I did not think of thee, King Solomon. Those who are the most devoted are not always the best rewarded. Gentle beast.

PRISCILLA [*to the children*]. Say farewell to David, children, and come along.

WILLIAM PENN AND HARMONY. Peace be with thee, David.

DAVID [*stroking their heads*]. And with thee, little man, and thee, Harmony.

MEHITABEL. Come, William Penn.

[PRISCILLA and HARMONY move toward the gate followed by MEHITABEL and WILLIAM PENN.]

ALDERMAN [*dryly — to GLADIUS*]. I suppose I'll have to accompany King Solomon. [*He takes the lead from GLADIUS and moves behind MEHITABEL and WILLIAM PENN.*]

[JOSEPH walks along with them at their right, RACHEL at their left. DAVID remains down stage.]

WILLIAM PENN [*as they move toward the gate — turning to ALDERMAN*]. Peter, does thee like dogs?

ALDERMAN. Very much, old fellow.

WILLIAM PENN. Does thee like dogs better than ladies?

ALDERMAN. Well, I have found them more faithful. [*They laugh.*]

[PRISCILLA and HARMONY have reached the gate.]

DAVID [*calling after them*]. Come again soon.

HARMONY AND WILLIAM PENN [*in their childish voices from beyond the gate*]. We will, David.

[GLADIUS closes the gate and goes off stage at the upper end of the house.]

[RACHEL has come down stage a little right of centre near the bench. JOSEPH is above her near the centre.]

[*The afternoon light has been deepening. Now broad streaks of dusky saffron and crimson lie along the sky*

line at the right back. The shadows of the trees have lengthened. Their branched arms are silhouetted against the approaching evening. A ray of dim gold is upon the sun-dial. The cardinals begin their evening song.]

DAVID [*moving to the steps of the house*]. Will ye excuse me while I confer with the Committee regarding the Meeting House property? [*He walks up the steps and into the house.*]

RACHEL [*sitting on the bench with the embroidery frame before her, looking after her father*]. Dear father. [*Beginning to work on her frame.*] Sometimes he seems to me like one from another world.

JOSEPH [*sitting in the chair at her left facing her*]. If you mean that the flame of belief burns vehemently within him —

RACHEL. Yes. He would adapt life to him, whereas most of us must adapt ourselves to life. And life is so tremendous. Who can stand up before its plunging hoofs? . . . I grow afraid for his sake.

JOSEPH. You should not. Such a man is a light-house amid the storms of the world. If he falls, it is in glory. In that sense nothing can harm him.

RACHEL [*inquiringly*]. Would such a fate content you?

JOSEPH. I could not ask for a better one, if I were so great a man. [*His eyes in the distance.*] To serve with all that is best within one! To exalt life and its holy causes — the perishable stuff of life, tinged with the darkness of death, yet illumined by stars. . . .

RACHEL. Is that your faith?

JOSEPH [*hesitatingly*]. Is any man sure of what he believes or is? Least of all of his faith, which is a dream, a reach of the spirit?

RACHEL [*lifting smiling eyes to him*]. Yes, there was a time when father had some doubt of your ortho-

doxy.—Remember when you helped Gladius to escape in the underground railway?

JOSEPH [*smiling*]. And had the fight with the over-seer?

RACHEL [*laughing — shaking her head*]. A Friend in a fight — dreadful!!

JOSEPH [*ruefully — stroking his chin*]. I had a swollen eye and a split lip. [*With a sigh.*] It was a wonderful feeling.

RACHEL. Your Uncle Caleb fervently declared you would yet succeed in being disowned by the Meeting.

JOSEPH. And with what a spirit you defended me. There you stood, your hair like a blackbird's wings and the dawn flaming up in your eyes — for all the world like one of those little woodland maidens that the Greeks fancied inhabited the trees. And you said: "If ye disown Joseph, ye must disown me, too, for my heart approveth him."

RACHEL [*smilingly*]. Were you not my comrade? Could I do less?

JOSEPH. I have ever held you in grateful remembrance for it.—Remember when you sailed for England?

RACHEL. Only last year. Yet how long ago it seems.

JOSEPH. You were waving to your father and me from the deck of the *Great Eastern*, and I felt very lonely, as if you were sailing into a world where I could not follow you. "New scenes will crowd in on thee," I thought, "whilst we remain treading the olden ways. Good-bye, little maiden, sailing away from girlhood."

RACHEL. I could not see my father nor thee for the tears that were in my eyes.

JOSEPH [*lightly*]. Then came your expressive letters: Old London, and Westminster with its battleflags, and Queen Victoria, a plump little woman almost smothered beneath her diamonds.

RACHEL [*laughing softly*]. That's just how the dear lady looked.

JOSEPH. And our great John Bright, and Gladstone, and Disraeli.

RACHEL. And the soirees, all plumes and silken gowns and glittering jewels! [*Frowning.*] And then to come back from those scenes of wit and eloquence and established freedom — back to my own country where they still had chattel slavery! [*She turns away. He is silent.*]

JOSEPH [*after a pause*]. You gave no hint of your feeling.

RACHEL. Yet it was here in my heart like a corrosive element. Oh, don't think I nourished the bitterness. It was as if somebody — not I — were scornfully asking, "Where is the boasted greatness of America?"

JOSEPH [*astonished*]. Surely you do not feel so now?

RACHEL. No, for then occurred a miracle. [*JOSEPH looks at her inquiringly.*] At old Independence Hall in Philadelphia less than two months ago.

JOSEPH [*intent*]. What happened?

RACHEL. It was at a flag-raising. Abraham Lincoln spoke.

JOSEPH. On his way to Washington for his inauguration . . . ?

RACHEL. Yes. He rose up — a tall, gaunt man — oh, how tall! You would have thought him homely till you saw the charity of his face and those sad eyes.

JOSEPH. Does thee remember what he said?

RACHEL. He spoke only a few minutes. But one thought has remained with me. [*She tries to recollect the phrasing.*] He had often inquired of himself, he said, what great principle or idea had kept our country so long together. It was not the separation of the colonies from England, but that sentiment born in Independence Hall, where he was now standing, which gave Liberty

not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world.

JOSEPH [*as if looking into the future — quietly*]. The destiny of America.

RACHEL. And as he stood there looking out upon the assemblage with his careworn, deeply-lined countenance, the cold pain that had gathered in my heart died away, and my distracted country became in that moment dearer to me than anything in all the world. [*She brushes the tears from her eyes.*]

JOSEPH [*meditatively*]. Abraham Lincoln . . .

RACHEL [*recovering herself*]. I wonder if he will be known as a great man, for he seemed to me at that moment to be greater than any of the great men I had ever seen.

JOSEPH. There he is in Washington, that tall, gaunt man, with the sad face of great charity, and now Sumter is being fired on.

RACHEL. And thee and I here in the placid sunset, with the cardinals whistling in the trees, as if peace were on all the world.

[*Music is heard, instruments playing, faintly at first, then sweeter and clearer moment by moment. A strong baritone voice sings a foreign song to its accompaniment, the words indistinguishable in the distance.*]

JOSEPH [*as the light deepens*]. Can thee still see to sew?

RACHEL. The light is ample. [*Indicating her sewing.*] For my new pelisse. One of those long cloaks. Mine will be silk. [*Thinking intently.*] Soft grey, almost like a pearl.

JOSEPH. I — I dream of thee in it.

RACHEL [*smiling*]. Thee has learned strange modes of speech in the Legislature.

JOSEPH. Or in an older school.

RACHEL [*tremulously*]. And what is that?

JOSEPH. The heart's yearning amid these evenings drenched with the scent of grape hyacinths and the song of the wood thrushes on their return. [*He has risen slowly, and she after him. Their hands meet. He draws her to him. They embrace.*] I have loved thee and waited for thee for years.

RACHEL. And I for thee. "For my heart approveth thee."

JOSEPH. Little comrade. [*Long pause.*] Will thee let me announce our intention to wed at the next Monthly Meeting?

RACHEL. Does thee not think that soon? With these shadows about us?

JOSEPH. If they disperse, we shall be happy. And if they do not, we shall build us a shelter against them together. That is love.

RACHEL [*in a half-whisper as she bows her head*]. As thee says. [*They embrace — his left arm about her they move quietly toward the sun-dial.*] The shadow lengthens on the sun-dial. It is getting late.

JOSEPH [*softly*]. Hush, dear. This moment is neither early nor late. It will never pass. It is eternal. [*They are now at the dial.*]

RACHEL. I hardly ever noticed this inscription before, although I have known it all my life. [*She reads the inscription.*] "The Light that fades will yet outlive this stone —"

JOSEPH [*beside her, reading*]. "And Love shall reign, though Death usurp his throne." [*She gives him both her hands.*] From the beginning of all beginnings to the end beyond all ends, Love that conquers Death. [*He raises her hands to his lips.*]

[*The music vanishes in the distance.*]

[*DAVID comes out of the house and stands upon the stoop. A step behind him is CALEB; to CALEB's right is*

ISAAC, *and to his left is JONATHAN. The light of the afternoon is fading gradually into the deeper ox-blood glow of sunset.*]

DAVID [*standing on the stoop in the glory of scarlet-tinged amber and deep shadows — pausing to drink in the beauty of the approaching evening*]. How peacefully the sunlight falls upon the olden fields. Verily, beautiful upon the hills are the feet of the beloved. [*He slowly comes down the steps.*] How this splendour brushes away all doubts. [CALEB *comes down the steps after him; the other two men walk after CALEB.*]

CALEB. If thee doubts, who shall be firm?

DAVID. Misgivings were the better word. The heat of the noonday sun has worn me out.

RACHEL [*solicitously as she and JOSEPH move toward her father*]. Thee is not ill?

DAVID [*resting his hand affectionately upon her shoulder*]. Nay, only my spirit is weary. The evening is not yet come. When it does, I must pass on my staff to another. [*To JOSEPH.*] Joseph. [JOSEPH *takes a step toward him.*] Thee must carry our banner still further.

JOSEPH. Thee wants me to take up thy work?

DAVID [*turning to ISAAC and JONATHAN*]. Know ye of one better fitted?

ISAAC. Nay.

JONATHAN. Nor one in whom we do more trust.

[CALEB *stands silently beside JOSEPH during the ensuing lines.*]

DAVID [*to JOSEPH — as if in benediction*]. May the revelation of the spirit and fire be in thy heart of hearts —

JONATHAN. In constancy and patience —

ISAAC. With a waiting upon God in silence —

DAVID. That thy works may satisfy the weary and

afflicted souls of men. [*The other men bow reverently.*]

JOSEPH [*humbly bowing his head*]. Ye honour me beyond the power of words to express.

DAVID. It is an honour that I delight to bestow on thee, for I love thee. Were thee my son, I could not love thee more.

JOSEPH [*with a change*]. I have always sought to meet thy approbation, David, but I did even aspire to be in another sense thy son. [*RACHEL comes softly to her father.*]

DAVID [*lays his left hand upon the shoulder of JOSEPH and his right upon that of RACHEL, and peers whimsically into their faces. Then he wags his head quaintly — to JOSEPH*]. Thee need not hesitate. I suspicioned it long ago.

JOSEPH. That I loved Rachel?

DAVID [*RACHEL in his arms*]. Ay, lad. An old man's eyes are keen and look far into the future when he has so dear a daughter as — [*looking into RACHEL's eyes*] thee.

JOSEPH [*simply*]. I have loved her ever since I grew to know what true love is.

DAVID [*dryly*]. H'm. [*He takes their right hands.*]

JOSEPH. Thee consents?

DAVID [*for answer uniting their hands*]. Whom rather would I see wed my daughter than him who espouses my cause? [*While they stand before him with joined hands.*] Live long and happily in paths of pleasantness and ways of peace. [*The beating of a horse's hoofs is heard off stage to the right.*]

JOSEPH [*starting*]. What's that?

BENJAMIN [*off stage, crying out*]. Joseph! Joseph!

RACHEL [*in anxiety*]. Benjamin!

BENJAMIN [*off stage*]. Joseph! Peter! Joseph!

[*JOSEPH hastens to the gate and opens it. The horse's hoofbeats abruptly stop, and BENJAMIN, breathless and*

begrimed with dust, rushes upon the stage and in at the gate.]

JOSEPH. What's happened?

BENJAMIN [*hardly able to speak in his excitement*]. Sumter!

JOSEPH [*alarmed*]. What of Sumter?

BENJAMIN. Surrendered.

CALEB. But the reinforcements?

BENJAMIN [*still breathless*]. The ships . . . outside the harbour . . . steady fire from Fort Moultrie . . . The troops . . . couldn't land.

ALDERMAN [*in great excitement coming hastily from the left and entering the gate*]. They've taken Sumter.

DAVID. Thee is sure of the surrender?

ALDERMAN. The whole countryside is alive.

DAVID [*still unconvinced*]. Is the report confirmed?

ALDERMAN. Yes, with little ammunition and few men Anderson couldn't hold out.

MEHITABEL [*hurriedly entering the gate*]. Have ye heard?

DAVID [*with an outcry*]. Ay, every wind multiplies the dread tidings.

ALDERMAN. It is the end of dallying.

BENJAMIN [*excitedly*]. The opening gun has been fired —

ALDERMAN. Against the Union!

JOSEPH [*solemnly*]. The war is inevitable now.

DAVID [*in anguish of spirit raising his arms in prayer*]. The horn of the ungodly is indeed exalted above the Lord's heritage.

PRISCILLA [*off stage — in excitement*]. Joseph — Joseph — !

[*The girl comes hurrying through the gate. At the same time the door of the house opens and GLADIUS stands upon the stoop, the afternoon light upon him.*]

JOSEPH [*hastening to PRISCILLA*]. What is it?

PRISCILLA [*breathlessly, a telegram in her hand*]. A telegram! It must be important. I have just heard of Sumter.

JOSEPH. Give it to me? [*She hands him the telegram. All the others are intently watching JOSEPH, while he tears open the envelope and reads the message.*]

RACHEL. What does it say?

JOSEPH [*looking at her but speaking for all to hear*]. Governor Curtin has called a conference for Second Day in Philadelphia to deal with the national crisis.

DAVID. Joseph, I am growing old, but thee is young with many years open before thee. The burden of our cause I entrust to thy keeping. [*Continuing as JOSEPH bows his head before him.*] Who knows but thee was sent to the Kingdom for such a time as this that thee should be the instrument in the Lord's hands to further the cause.

JOSEPH [*gravely as he raises his head*]. A golden treasure in vases of clay!

DAVID [*with increasing solemnity*]. Then that the treasure may be preserved, the Friends must have no complicity with war either directly or indirectly. They must refrain from the use of arms and of encouraging such use by the Government. This charge I give to thee. [*Pause.*] Will thee take it? [*JOSEPH is silent. RACHEL beside him hangs on his every glance.*]

[*DAVID presses home his query.*] Will thee accept the charge?

JOSEPH [*looking at RACHEL, then firmly and sadly at DAVID*]. I'll do what I can, David.

DAVID [*with a touch of sternness*]. Thee hesitates? Thee, a Friend and the son of generations of Friends? [*Speaking with difficulty.*] Thee is standing now at the parting of the ways.

JOSEPH [*stirred, his face growing stronger with the instinct of purpose*]. Ay, at the parting of the ways.

[*The others look at him. DAVID stands erect. Then as BENJAMIN presses closer to JOSEPH, his face glowing with excitement and exultation, and the former slave, GLADIUS, peers out through his old eyes into the setting sun,*

THE CURTAIN FALLS]

ACT II

ACT II

SCENE: *The living-room of JOSEPH BARING's home, handsome in its colouring of pale sea-green and old ivory, with white wood-work and mahogany doors. It is the home of Friends of eminence, yet suggests that the World is beginning to invade it.*

At the back is a wide arch almost the width of the room, supported by columns of colonial design of the colour of old ivory, which opens upon a hallway at the rear along the width of the room. In the far wall of this hallway, facing the spectator, is a handsome triple window. In the same wall to the left of the window, is a door which opens upon the landing outside. Several steps are supposed to lead from it to the right off stage down to the ground. At the right of the hallway are the mahogany newel-post and lower steps of the white staircase, leading up to the right, with a passageway between the staircase and the wall of the living-room, going off stage to the right.

At the right of the living-room is a finely proportioned open fireplace and white marble mantel. The fireplace is backed with platings of delicately cast charcoal-iron. On the same side above the fireplace is a door leading to other rooms. On the left of the room is a large French window opening onto the garden.

At the left of the centre in a slanting position, standing out from the French window, is a square piano of rose-wood, the keyboard farthest from the spectator. On the hither side of the piano is a colonial settee. At the right of the centre is a round table covered with tapestry. An oil lamp with a large shade is upon it. Beside the table

is a large upholstered chair and two smaller chairs. Several other chairs of graceful design are about the room.

Beneath the window at the back is a window-seat. In the upper corners of the room are walnut book-cases with large volumes which still show their golden lettering. In front of the case at the upper left is a second table with another attractive oil lamp upon it. From the ceiling hangs a fine crystal chandelier bearing a number of unlighted candles.

Beside the fireplace is a porcelain jar holding paper spills and wax tapers. On the white marble mantelpiece is an old shelf-clock. At either side of it is a silver candlestick with a candle. A similar candlestick is on each side of the piano.

It is Fifth Day (Thursday), July 11, three months after the events of the preceding act.

It is the hour after twilight. Beyond the windows the blueblack sky of a summer night is interspersed with stars. Occasionally the whip-poor-wills are heard calling.

As the curtain rises PRISCILLA BARING is seen seated at the piano playing an interlude. The lamp at the upper left and the candles on the piano are lighted. On the settee in front of the piano are CALEB SCATTERGOOD with HARMONY at his right and WILLIAM PENN at his left, all three reading a picture book. At their feet lies KING SOLOMON. Save for the soft light of the lamp and the tapering flames of the candles framing in PRISCILLA and the silvery old man and the children, the room is filled with dusky shadows.

PRISCILLA wears a delicate maize-tinted tissue with the full skirt billowing over hoops. HARMONY is dressed in fine white India muslin, unembroidered. Delicately ruffled pantalets peep beneath the full skirt. CALEB is garbed in the customary Friends' dress, save that the material of his suit is a light grey serge. Little WILLIAM

PENN *wears a suit of natural coloured linen with long trousers and a little short coat of denim blue.*

CALEB. What is thee playing?

PRISCILLA. A little thing by Tschaikowsky.

CALEB [*thoughtfully*]. Never heard of him. A new man?

PRISCILLA. Yes, a young Russian just twenty-one.

HARMONY [*as PRISCILLA continues playing — softly*]. When is Uncle Joseph coming home, Granduncle Caleb?

CALEB. Very soon, lassie.

WILLIAM PENN. I hope he brings me somethin'.

HARMONY [*loftily*]. Always thinking of thyself.

WILLIAM PENN [*with tightened teeth — as a counter-stroke*]. Just f'r that, when I grow up, I'm goin' to chew t'bacco!

CALEB. Peace, thee sausage! Will thee hearken to that heavenly harmony?

WILLIAM PENN [*sturdily as he slips to the floor beside KING SOLOMON*]. Friends don't care nothin' 'bout music.

CALEB [*remorsefully as he rises and goes to the upper end of the settee*]. The poodle's right. A piano in the home of a Friend!

PRISCILLA. Mother insisted that Joseph and I learn to play.

CALEB. My dear sister was somewhat worldly.

PRISCILLA. Does it grieve thee?

CALEB [*sunnily*]. No, the worst of it is, I enjoy it. [PRISCILLA *strikes a magnificent chord fortissimo*]. Is that a reason thee must bang so at that devil's instrument? — I do hope Joseph will soon return from Harrisburg. I can do nothing with thee.

PRISCILLA [*playing a Chopin waltz*]. Am I so frightful a monster?

CALEB [*to whom she is as his heart's core*]. Ay, a fire-breathing salamander.

PRISCILLA [*laughs — then*]. Rachel and Mehitabel are a bit late.

CALEB. Did thee ever know thy delightful sex to be on time?

PRISCILLA. Rachel usually is, and with all her trouble too. Is David still angry?

CALEB. Thee should say unhappy. My poor friend! Benjamin's enlistment was a severe blow to him.

PRISCILLA. Now that Bennie's home on a furlough, David shouldn't make it so bitter for him.

CALEB. Nay, Priscilla, David is not bitter at Benjamin. He is only bitter at what the boy has done, for his heart yearns toward the lad.

PRISCILLA. He doesn't seem very talkative when you mention Joseph, either.

CALEB [*passing it off*]. Oh, that's not serious.

PRISCILLA. These precious men! If I were betrothed, and my fiancé had abandoned me for three months as Joseph has Rachel . . .

CALEB. Well, what would thee do?

PRISCILLA [*grinning at him*]. I would shoot him in the ear with a pop-gun!

CALEB. Heaven help the poor man — I do believe thee would. [*To HARMONY and WILLIAM PENN.*] Take King Solomon and prepare for bed.

HARMONY [*loath to go*]. Just a little while, Granduncle Caleb.

WILLIAM PENN [*caterwauling*]. I don't want to go to bed.

HARMONY [*simultaneously*]. I don't want to go to bed.

CALEB [*with an heroic effort*]. Must I be stern? Must I roar like a lion seeking whom he may devour?

HARMONY. Oh, Granduncle Caleb, thee is so funny.

CALEB [*who has moved to them*]. Funny! Out of my sight, irreverent bugs.

[*The two children run up three or four steps in high glee. CALEB kisses them over the bannister; then with KING SOLOMON between them they run up the remaining steps and out of view.*]

CALEB. [*Coming down to the French window, while PRISCILLA continues playing*]. What a night of stars!

PRISCILLA. There should be lanterns on the lawn, an expanse of flowered crinoline. . . .

CALEB [*falling into her mood*]. And sky-rockets . . . and young boys singing. [*There is a pause while the whip-poor-wills call.*] Yet I love the whip-poor-wills.

PRISCILLA. Wouldn't thee like this loveliness to last forever? It makes the heart ache — how everything passes.

CALEB [*gently*]. Nay, when thee is a dear old lady, and haply thy niece plays to *thee*, there will be the same stars, the same beauty of music, the same fragrance of heliotrope and mignonette, and the same whip-poor-wills. In that view there is no death, for all these beautiful and vital processes go on.

PRISCILLA. And yet, Uncle Caleb, I would have thee always just as thee is.

CALEB [*beside her*]. And I thee, always as thee is, for thee is the loveliness and longing of immortal youth.

[*He kisses her lightly upon the forehead. The rumble of wheels is heard off stage; then the crack of a whip, and a voice calling, "Whoa!"*]

JOSEPH [*off stage*]. Thank thee, Noah, here is thy fare. [*A voice off stage answers, "Thank thee, Joseph."*]

CALEB [*joyfully*]. It's Joseph.

PRISCILLA [*with her elfinlike exaggeration*]. Oh, I'm overcome with surprise. I fear I shall swoon.

CALEB [*dryly, as he and PRISCILLA go to the door, upper left*]. If thee does, I'll pour cold water down thy neck.

[JOSEPH enters, a portmanteau in his hands. He drops his portmanteau and a long linen duster on the window-seat.]

PRISCILLA [*flinging herself at him*]. Joseph!

JOSEPH. Sis. [*He takes her in his arms. Then, releasing her*]. Uncle Caleb!

CALEB. I'm glad to see thee back, Joseph. [*The men clasp hands.*]

PRISCILLA [*to JOSEPH*]. When did thee arrive?

JOSEPH. Noah just drove me over from the station.

PRISCILLA. Shall I have a place spread for thee?

JOSEPH. Nay, I have dined.

[*At this moment the childish treble voices of WILLIAM PENN and HARMONY are heard at the head of the stairs calling joyously.*]

WILLIAM PENN. Uncle Joseph!

HARMONY [*simultaneously*]. Uncle Joseph!

[JOSEPH, as the two children run down the steps in their night gowns, lifts them in his arms.]

JOSEPH. Harmony! William Penn! [*They fling their arms around his neck and hug him.*]

HARMONY [*imitating PRISCILLA's manner and tone*]. Oh, Uncle Joseph, I have missed thee to distraction!

CALEB [*glaring at PRISCILLA*]. Behold thy pernicious example!

JOSEPH [*to HARMONY*]. And I have missed thee, Honeybell.

WILLIAM PENN [*to JOSEPH*]. Did thee bring me somethin'?

JOSEPH [*evasively*]. My trunk is coming tomorrow.

HARMONY AND WILLIAM PENN [*disappointed*]. Oh!

JOSEPH [*pretending indifference*]. There may be certain things in it.

HARMONY AND WILLIAM PENN [*brightening*]. Oh!

JOSEPH. A magic lantern. . . .

HARMONY AND WILLIAM PENN [*overcome*]. Oh!

JOSEPH [*with a deepening voice*]. And a patent goat that goes "ba-ba," and then butts you.

HARMONY AND WILLIAM PENN [*burrowing in his shoulders and squealing and kicking with delight*]. Ee-e!

JOSEPH [*as he sets them down on the floor*]. Here's something meanwhile. [*He takes from his pocket two dainty little boxes which he gives to them.*]

WILLIAM PENN [*opening his box — in rapture*]. Rock candy! [*He pops a lump of it into his mouth, making his cheek stick out.*]

HARMONY. Red and yellow and white, oh Uncle Joseph!

PRISCILLA [*anxiously*]. Don't swallow it, William Penn.

WILLIAM PENN [*taking the candy out of his mouth to speak*]. Only girls swallow candy. [*He pops it back into his mouth.*]

JOSEPH [*amused*]. What do you do, William Penn?

WILLIAM PENN [*thickly*]. Lick it!

CALEB [*to the children*]. Kiss Uncle Joseph — and — [*He points with his finger meaningfully.*]

JOSEPH [*kissing the children*]. Good-night, little fellows.

CALEB. Hobgoblins — night-owls —

HARMONY [*as she runs to the steps — laughingly to*

CALEB]. Salamanders, . . . bugs . . .

WILLIAM PENN [*mockingly — to CALEB*]. Sausage!

[*CALEB starts toward them as if crossly. They fly up the steps with squeaks of delight. JOSEPH comes back into the room, PRISCILLA to his left. CALEB meanwhile crosses to the fireplace, takes a wax taper from the porcelain jar and lights it with a sulphur match.*]

JOSEPH. How is Rachel?

PRISCILLA [*loftily*]. Quite well. But that is a tribute to the strength of her constitution. Were I so neglected, I should pine away in a swift decline.

JOSEPH [*smilingly*]. Rachel's not thy kind of girl.

CALEB [*devoutly as he lights the candles on the mantel*]. For which thee may render devout thanks.

JOSEPH. She knows I've been in the thick of it in Philadelphia and Washington. But I'm going right over to see her.

PRISCILLA. Thee need not. Mehitabel and she are coming tonight to assist me in scraping lint. [*CALEB is now lighting the lamp on the table right of centre.*]

JOSEPH. Splendid! And how is David?

CALEB. Thee knows of Benjamin's enlistment?

JOSEPH [*seriously*]. Yes. Rachel wrote me.

CALEB [*his words full of meaning*]. That is sufficient answer as to how David is. [*He quenches the taper and replaces it.*]

JOSEPH. She wrote, too, of David's displeasure with me.

CALEB [*shaking off the mood*]. Sufficient unto the day!—Thee has just arrived. Make thyself at home. [*They seat themselves.*]

PRISCILLA [*to JOSEPH*]. Does thee know the Committee of the Meeting has been inquiring for thee ever since thee announced thy intention to wed Rachel?

JOSEPH. Jonathan has just told me.

CALEB [*in surprise*]. Has thee seen him?

JOSEPH [*nodding*]. As I was coming down.—He said the Committee would like to visit me as soon as might be.

CALEB. Did thee appoint a time?

JOSEPH. I informed him I could see them at any time convenient to them; and he declared that if he could reach Isaac, they would call tonight.

PRISCILLA [*ominously*]. Prepare for the worst!

JOSEPH [*perturbed*]. Are their questions very severe?

CALEB [*confidentially*]. Well, if there is any reason why thee should not wed Rachel, better tell me now, and we shall conspire to circumvent them.

[*The clapper sounds sharply. All three rise.*]

PRISCILLA. Ho, ho, it's the Committee now.

JOSEPH [*swallowing hard*]. I did not expect them so soon.

PRISCILLA. Put on thy best orthodox manner, Joseph.

JOSEPH [*severely*]. Take heed to thyself, woman!

CALEB [*going to the door*]. Is thee ready, Joseph?

JOSEPH [*pulling himself together*]. Yes, admit them.

[CALEB opens the door, and GLADIUS BROWN enters with a large basket.]

CALEB [*smiling*]. Is thee the Committee from the Meeting, Gladius?

GLADIUS [*mystified*]. No, sah, Ah's a Mefodist. [*They laugh.*]

PRISCILLA. Is your mistress at home?

GLADIUS. No, Miss Priscilla. Miss Rachel done come hyar soon.

JOSEPH [*to GLADIUS*]. What have you there, Gladius?

GLADIUS. Linen foh bandages, Marse Joseph.

CALEB [*to GLADIUS*]. Gladius. what does thee think of all this ado?

GLADIUS [*with feeling*]. Ah dunno, Marse Caleb. 'Pears lak the day o' judgment done come upon the erth, and brudder fight brudder. [*Peering at JOSEPH with hopeful questioning.*] Dey say Marse Linkum gwine free de slaves?

JOSEPH. I hope so, Gladius.

GLADIUS [*his bent frame uplifted; his eyes in the distance*]. De slaves free! De chains broken! N'mo slavehs ketchin' us in Africa, and we'uns dyin' on de road, whar de bones o' black men mark de way, fur's

de eye kin see, white and shinin' in de sun. N'mo slave ships; n'mo blood-hounds; n'mo whip; n'mo buyin' and sellin' lil' chillun and wimmen and men and ol' folks, just lak God done fergit 'em. N'mo breakin' up de fambly, and sendin' de pappy dar, and de mammy dar, and de babies dar,—and dey neber see one nuthuh agin. [*With veneration.*] Ef Marse Linkum gwine do dat . . . [*Pause — quietly . . . almost incredulously.*] De slaves free!

PRISCILLA. Stranger things have happened, Gladius. I know a certain old Friend who likes music.

CALEB. Hussy!

[MEHITABEL *enters at the French window. She wears the usual Friends' dress, the material being a pretty grey barege.*]

MEHITABEL. I saw the light, and came across the gardens.

CALEB [*warmly*]. And right thee was, Mehitabel. Who would walk along a dusty road when he might come through garden greenery and the shadow of roses? [*He conducts her into the room.*]

MEHITABEL [*seeing JOSEPH*]. Ah Joseph, I am glad thee is returned.

JOSEPH [*charmingly*]. And I am glad to see thee, Mehitabel.

MEHITABEL [*seeing GLADIUS — to PRISCILLA*]. Is Rachel arrived?

PRISCILLA. Not yet. Mehitabel. But Gladius says we may expect her presently.

GLADIUS. Yass'm. She say she come 'long right after me.

PRISCILLA [*to MEHITABEL*]. We might as well get things started in the meantime.

CALEB [*teasingly*]. Laborious butterfly.

MEHITABEL. Indeed, she is very capable, Caleb.

CALEB [*pinching PRISCILLA's cheek*]. Would she be my niece if she were not?

PRISCILLA. I like that! [*Gaily.*] Come along, Gladius, thee may help us. Come, Mehitabel. [*Significantly.*] Uncle Caleb will assist us too.

CALEB [*going after them to the door, upper left*]. Ay, dragged like a captive at thy chariot wheels.

[*The little group move to the door above the fireplace, and go out, leaving JOSEPH alone.*]

[*He looks after them a moment; then seats himself at the piano, and plays the andante movement from a Beethoven sonata.*]

[*Through the French window at the left RACHEL enters and stands for a moment watching JOSEPH while he plays. Her dress is of poplin, the colour of blue primroses.*]

JOSEPH [*looking up and seeing her*]. Rachel! [*He hastens to her.*]

RACHEL [*tremulously*]. My dear . . . [*She is in his arms.*]

JOSEPH. My beloved! [*A pause — then, tenderly.*] Thee is weeping.

RACHEL. It is for happiness at seeing thee once more. Oh, my dear, my dear, hold me close . . . close, and say thee will never leave me, never, never.

JOSEPH [*gently*]. Thee knows I will not.

RACHEL. Nor go away from me no matter what befalls?

JOSEPH. No matter what befalls. For I hold thee dearest of all in life.

RACHEL. Thee can never know how great has been my need of thee.

JOSEPH. And mine of thee. When I sat in Committee or in my place in the House, or went to and fro from Washington, and the heavy droning of affairs drummed

in my ears, then I knew what it was to love thee and to be so far away.

RACHEL. I would not have thee think me weak. And yet, oh, I am so weak. One wave of the sea of this war has rolled over our house. I have had no power to withstand it, and it has crushed me and all of us, and home is home no more.

JOSEPH [*comfortingly as he strokes her hair*]. Nay, dear, this conflict has prostrated even the strongest men. And thee is brave . . . ay, my heart commends thee in every way. [*He leads her to the settee in front of the piano, and they sit down.*] Now tell me.

RACHEL [*more composed*]. Thy vote in the Legislature after the surrender of Sumter . . .

JOSEPH. When we endorsed the President's call for volunteers?

RACHEL. Father could not realize it. He could not . . . nay, would not believe it.

JOSEPH. I intended writing him, but could not put it all on paper.

RACHEL. But when the Governor entrusted thee with the transportation of troops, and thee accepted the charge — then he realized.

JOSEPH. What did he say?

RACHEL. Nothing. He was dumbfounded . . . like a man struck to the heart.

JOSEPH. I am grieved for that.

RACHEL [*looking away*]. To see him walking through the house day after day, without saying a word . . . oh, it is frightful to see a strong man sorrow! And then, coming on top of that, Benjamin's enlistment! And to know his heart was breaking.

JOSEPH [*compassionately*]. Thee has had this to bear alone.

RACHEL. He blames Benjamin's enlistment on thee.

JOSEPH. I said nothing to the lad.

RACHEL. Father feels thy example gave him encouragement. I thought that when Benjamin returned home on a furlough yesterday . . .

JOSEPH. Has David seen him?

RACHEL. Yes. It was very painful. His very love for the boy makes his wound deeper. If I could only melt his terrible sternness!

JOSEPH. He will soften in time, and learn to forgive.

RACHEL. Thee doesn't know my father. I have thought it best to keep Benjamin out of his sight. What a homecoming for the boy!

JOSEPH. When does his furlough expire?

RACHEL. In the morning. He must leave tonight.

JOSEPH. I must see him.

RACHEL. He left home before me to bid Priscilla and Caleb good-bye.

JOSEPH. He hasn't been here since I arrived.

RACHEL. Probably he stopped on the way. As I started out, father said he would come here after a while to take me home. I declared it wasn't necessary — tried to dissuade him, but he insisted. and I feared to rouse his suspicions that Benjamin might be here.

JOSEPH. Benjamin can leave before David comes.

RACHEL. Perhaps it would be better if Benjamin should go straight to the train from here.

JOSEPH. I'll tell him.

RACHEL. And, Joseph, be very considerate in thy manner toward father . . . for my sake.

JOSEPH. Could I be other toward him?

RACHEL. No matter what he says. He has even quarrelled with Peter.

JOSEPH. I feared that.

RACHEL. Remember it is his pain that is speaking, and not himself.

JOSEPH [*rising — her hands in his*]. Thee may trust me.

The Inward Light

RACHEL [*rising after him*]. I will trust thee always — to the end of life. Yea, further, while our spirits endure.

JOSEPH [*lifting her hands to his lips*]. They will endure. These indigo nights prove it — the glowing stars, and the scent of syringa and honeysuckle, and the night birds singing, and thee, and thy gentle goodness, and our love.

[*They embrace.*]

[*Boyish whistling is heard outside the French window.*]

[RACHEL moves a little up stage, drying her eyes. BENJAMIN enters through the French window from the garden. He is in uniform. His face is tanned, and his hair slightly bleached. He carries his cap in his hands.]

BENJAMIN. Joseph!

JOSEPH [*taking both his hands — warmly*]. Benjamin!

BENJAMIN. Hello, sis, dear.

RACHEL [*not turning — with brave lightness*]. Hello, Bennie.

BENJAMIN [*looking round*]. The old place is much the same. But to have the stars above you at night, one deeper than another — burning in the darkness, and the camp fires all round, and the guns and glistening bayonets . . .

JOSEPH. Thee is happy thee enlisted?

BENJAMIN [*with uplifted head*]. Yes. It has been the greatest happiness of my life. [*With a strange new thoughtfulness.*] It's the first step that's hard. But once I took the oath I was quite peaceful and without fear. . . . What does it matter what happens to me so long as the Union lives!

JOSEPH [*solemnly*]. And it will live.

BENJAMIN. And all the generations after us will have freedom and peace . . .

RACHEL. But does thee think of our heart-ache?

BENJAMIN [*coming to her — gently*]. Why does thee grieve? I shall come back. And if not, I gather up all the sweetness of life in the present, all the beauty that it can hold in the future. I take it into my two arms, and I lay it with all my love upon the altar of my country. Can a man do more for himself or for life, though he live a hundred years?

JOSEPH. Thee is leaving tonight?

BENJAMIN. Yes.

JOSEPH. Isn't there some way thee can make it up with thy father?

BENJAMIN [*his features working*]. Dad!

[*The clapper sounds at the rear door. JOSEPH walks to it, and opens it. PETER ALDERMAN enters. He is in business dress.*]

ALDERMAN. Joe, you back? Glad to see you. [*Fanning himself with his hat.*] Fine weather for corn . . . rather hard on us mortals. [*Catching sight of BENJAMIN.*] Hello, Bennie. And Rachel, too. Well, this is unexpected. [*He shakes hands with BENJAMIN.*] How are you, young fellow?

BENJAMIN. Quite well, thank you, Peter.

ALDERMAN [*lightly*]. You look like a man now. How'd you do it?

BENJAMIN [*in the same bantering tone*]. I've thought of destiny; I've looked at death, and I've eaten hard tack!

ALDERMAN. That's the right spirit, my boy. [*To JOSEPH.*] Caleb home?

BENJAMIN. I'd like to see him too. And Priscilla, if she's here.

JOSEPH. I'll call them.

[*He goes up stage to the right and out of the door.*]

ALDERMAN [*not without anxiety to RACHEL and BENJAMIN*]. How is your father?

BENJAMIN [*surprised*]. Haven't *you* seen him?

ALDERMAN. Not for a couple of days. He seems to avoid me.

RACHEL. You must be patient with him, Peter. The war has sorely tried him.

ALDERMAN. Yes, I know. But there are such serious business questions pending that I must see him. That's why I wanted to talk to Caleb.

[CALEB and JOSEPH enter from the door at the right, followed by PRISCILLA.]

CALEB. Ah, Rachel, my dear. [*Pleasantly, nodding to ALDERMAN.*] Peter. [*Then noticing BENJAMIN.*] Benjamin. I did not think to see thee in uniform. Of course as a Friend I should have to consent to thy disownment. But still I am glad to see thee, my lad.

PRISCILLA [*to RACHEL, as they kiss*]. Thee dear, stunning, lovely person!! [*To BENJAMIN.*] How fine thee looks, Benjamin!

[PRISCILLA and BENJAMIN walk up stage and sit down on the window-seat. JOSEPH and RACHEL are at the piano.]

CALEB [*turning to ALDERMAN at the right of the centre*]. Joseph tells me thee wishes to talk to me.

ALDERMAN. If you can spare the time.

CALEB [*taking a step toward the window at the left*]. We might go into the garden.

ALDERMAN [*slyly*]. I feel safer with you out of the dark.

CALEB [*jocularly — leading him to the table right of centre*]. Well, then I give thee free leave to discuss anything except my past life.

[*They laugh and then sit down.*]

ALDERMAN [*to JOSEPH, now seated at the piano*]. Go ahead and play, Joseph. We don't mind.

JOSEPH. All right, Peter.

[*He plays softly.* RACHEL at his right.]

ALDERMAN [*to* CALEB — *seriously*]. You're very close to David . . . even closer, I think, than Joseph here, because you two are of the old school. I wish you would use your good offices between us.

CALEB. Has there been friction?

ALDERMAN. I'm afraid so.

CALEB. I knew of his objection to government contracts, but I conjectured ye would find some means of accommodating your differences.

ALDERMAN. He's very set . . . avoids me. I can't get at him at all. Will you arrange a meeting?

CALEB. Of course I'll do what I can. But thee knows David's not a man to be turned, either to the left or to the right.

[BENJAMIN *rises quickly at the back and comes into the room. PRISCILLA is near the door.*]

BENJAMIN [*to* RACHEL]. Father's coming. I saw him through the window.

[JOSEPH *abruptly stops playing.*]

RACHEL. Perhaps you had better go into the dining-room.

JOSEPH. Benjamin, do you think you will have time to make your train?

BENJAMIN [*with pain*]. I know what you mean, Joseph . . . that I should leave without seeing father. [*The clapper sounds.*]

PRISCILLA. It is he.

RACHEL [*leading BENJAMIN to the door right, and opening it*]. Go, my dear boy, go, go!

[*She kisses him and hurries him and PRISCILLA out. JOSEPH follows them out of the room.*]

[CALEB *has gone to the door and opens it. DAVID enters. His appearance is that of a man who has known disappointment and sorrow in the intervening months; but his manner is humane and kindly even though beneath it speak his inflexible convictions.*]

DAVID [*as he enters, his hat on*]. Peace be to this house.

CALEB [*affectionately*]. And to thee and thine, David, peace.

DAVID [*moved*]. Ay, Caleb, peace is a blessing that my house has lacked. [*Recognizing PETER.*] Peter. [*To RACHEL.*] If thee is ready, Rachel, I will take thee home.

RACHEL [*moving toward him*]. Yes, father.

ALDERMAN [*moving up*]. David, may I crave your patient hearing for a moment?

DAVID [*courteously*]. Will not some other time do?

ALDERMAN. The matter is important — and I have waited several days for an opportunity to speak with you.

DAVID [*with some feeling*]. If thee can excuse me, Peter, I should be grateful.

ALDERMAN. Forgive my insistence. I even came here this evening to ask Caleb to bring about a friendly interview.

CALEB [*to DAVID*]. We are all life-long intimates.

RACHEL [*gently — to her father*]. Will thee not listen to thy old friend? [*DAVID remains silent.*]

ALDERMAN. David, you know we've had to lay off more and more of our men, and if it keeps up we'll soon have to close down the factory.

DAVID [*with a sigh — nodding*]. Ay, I know it.

ALDERMAN. The government has offered our firm a contract for forty thousand military uniforms. We have the equipment to make them. It will save our business and serve our country. Will you let our firm undertake it?

DAVID [*as if looking over the heads of those present*]. Seventy years ago my grandfather started the business. Then he took Peter's grandfather into partnership, and

the firm of Worthington and Alderman has continued without a break ever since.

CALEB. It has been a name to conjure with.

ALDERMAN. Never a strike, and our financial standing solid when other firms toppled.

DAVID. Ay, because its men were honest. They neither lied nor truckled to secure business, and more than life itself they valued principle.

ALDERMAN. That's just it. The contractors plundered the state with the first equipment, and our Pennsylvania soldiers three months ago were so scantily clothed that in six weeks they were an army of ragamuffins, their shoes with soles of pine shavings, and their blankets mere gossamer. The government has come to us because it knows we'll give it honest merchandise.

RACHEL. When must you return your answer?

ALDERMAN. In the morning.

DAVID. And thee asks for my decision?

ALDERMAN. I do, and I hope it will be a favourable one, both for the sake of our firm and the men we employ.

DAVID. My answer is ready as it has always been ready.

ALDERMAN. And that is — ?

DAVID. As a Friend I cannot accept it. [*Pause.*]

ALDERMAN. But why?

DAVID. It will be aiding in providing the sinews of war.

ALDERMAN [*quietly*]. We are partners, David?

DAVID. Ay.

ALDERMAN. Each with full power to bind the firm?

DAVID. Ay.

ALDERMAN. As a partner I am determined to accept the contract.

DAVID. Then thee must do it without me.

ALDERMAN. That would mean dissolution?

DAVID. If thee insists.

ALDERMAN. You would sooner withdraw from the firm than change your answer?

DAVID [*quietly*]. I would.

CALEB. Thee cannot go that far, David?

DAVID. Of all men, Caleb, *thee* knows I must.

CALEB [*remonstrating*]. But, David, the men.

DAVID [*more mildly to him*]. Acts are eloquent of the heart. War will not cease until lives conform to belief.

[CALEB *turns away with an attitude of reluctant admission.*]

ALDERMAN. David, don't be too hasty about this matter.

RACHEL. Father, cannot we ask thee to take this matter under advisement?

DAVID [*lovingly to her*]. Can I take under advisement the very breath by which I live? [*With deep and solemn passion.*] As with my fathers before me, principle is more to me than money; more than life itself. [*There is a pause,—to ALDERMAN.*] If by doing this thing thee would rather dissolve the partnership that has been kept in our two families almost from the birth of the nation, so be it. I cannot compromise with my teachings.

ALDERMAN [*taking up his hat and his cane*]. If that is your last word, there is nothing more to be said.

RACHEL. Father!

ALDERMAN [*reluctantly*]. Perhaps it were better we separate now than drag along hampered by disagreement.

CALEB [*to ALDERMAN*]. It is not too late to have both sides reconsider. It were a pity to dissolve a partnership of three generations.

ALDERMAN [*respectfully*]. With ruin staring us in the face and a way of safety open, I cannot bar that way to me. My mind is made up.

DAVID. And mine.

[CALEB *turns up stage.*]

ALDERMAN [*courteously — to DAVID*]. I will send my lawyers to you in the morning.

DAVID [*deeply affected*]. We need no lawyers, Peter. I trust thee implicitly. Wind up the partnership thyself. [*He turns away to master his emotion.*]

ALDERMAN [*with a step toward him*]. This does not mean that I don't respect your feeling; that I would not extend to you every help in any way you could ask for it.

DAVID [*turning to him*]. Thee has been my friend, Peter. Thee always will be.

[ALDERMAN *puts out his hand. DAVID takes it. Both men are deeply moved. ALDERMAN goes out hastily at the French window, left.*] And now, Rachel, I will take thee home.

[*The clapper sounds. CALEB goes to the door upstage left as RACHEL reluctantly and in suffering moves to join DAVID at the centre.*]

[JONATHAN and ISAAC *enter.*]

ISAAC [*to DAVID*]. Was thee going home?

DAVID [*with difficulty*]. Ay.

JONATHAN [*with a smile*]. Better stay.

ISAAC [*to CALEB*]. Hath Joseph acquainted thee with our object in coming here tonight? [CALEB *nods.*]

DAVID [*somewhat startled*]. Is Joseph returned?

CALEB. He arrived this evening. [*Going to the door upper right.*] I'll call him. [*He opens the door and calls.*] Joseph! [JOSEPH *enters.*]

JONATHAN [*to JOSEPH*]. As thee knows, Isaac and I are the Committee appointed by the Meeting to see thee and thy Unele Caleb regarding thy marriage to Rachel Worthington.

JOSEPH. Ye are welcome. [*Seeing DAVID.*] David.

DAVID [*kindly but with great reserve*]. Joseph.

[*With an effort.*] Perhaps it were better if Rachel and I were not present.

JOSEPH [*to DAVID*]. Next to Uncle Caleb, thee is closer to me than any other man. and Rachel is she whom I love.

RACHEL [*with quiet decision*]. We will stay, father.

[*DAVID in painful perturbation walks upstage to the window so as to be out of the scene.*]

CALEB. If there be no objection, I will call Mehitabel and Priscilla.

JONATHAN. There is none.

CALEB. The child is old enough to understand the significance of this visit, and Mehitabel is our friend. [*He walks to the door and calls.*] Priscilla — Mehitabel.

[*Meanwhile the committee seat themselves — ISAAC a little above the table at the right; JONATHAN above him to his left, nearer the centre. RACHEL sits upon the settee. JOSEPH stands beside her at the upper end of the settee to her right. PRISCILLA and MEHITABEL enter.*]

PRISCILLA [*coming into the room and taking in the scene*]. O-h-h, the committee.

[*She sidles down along the right wall, and sits down demurely near the fireplace, MEHITABEL directly above her to her left.*]

[*There is a silence while all settle themselves. In the pause CALEB goes to the mantelpiece, lights a taper, crosses to the chandelier, lights all the candles in it, and once more puts the taper away.*]

JONATHAN [*to JOSEPH, after all are properly composed*]. Thee knows our purpose? [*JOSEPH inclines his head.*] Thee loves Rachel Worthington?

JOSEPH [*her right hand in his*]. Ay, with all my

heart and soul. [JONATHAN, ISAAC, and CALEB *nod, pleased.*]

ISAAC [*importantly*]. Thee realizes the sanctity of the marriage relation?

JOSEPH. I do.

JONATHAN. And thee would leave all else, and cleave only to her thee hath chosen, if occasion required?

JOSEPH. I would. [*The three men nod.*]

ISAAC [*clearing his throat — then with a rising inflection.*] Thee is competent to support her?

JOSEPH. I have been blessed with a sufficiency for all needs.

ISAAC [*peering over his glasses*]. Thee knows of no reason why thee two should not wed?

CALEB [*breaking in*]. Of course not.

ISAAC [*to CALEB — crushingly*]. Is thee the bridegroom? [CALEB *subsides.*]

JONATHAN [*tentatively*]. Thee has incurred no obligation that would prevent thee from marrying?

JOSEPH. None.

JONATHAN [*to CALEB*]. And thee, Caleb, does thee approve?

CALEB. I have known Rachel since she was a little child. Like a rose hath she fulfilled the promise of her radiant girlhood. And I love her, for she seems even now like a daughter to me. I am happy that she is Joseph's choice — nay, rather that in this happiness of love they have chosen each other.

JONATHAN [*with dry humour at CALEB's elaborateness*]. In short — thee approves?

CALEB. In every respect and with most earnest and entire approval.

ISAAC. Well, thee might say so more briefly.— And thee knows of no hindrance to the marriage?

CALEB [*a little annoyed*]. Would I tell thee if I did?

ISAAC [*half-rising*]. Would thee conceal information from the Committee of the Meeting?

JONATHAN [*calming him*]. It is obvious that Caleb knows of no obstacle. [*Turning to CALEB.*] Answer no more than the questions asked thee.

CALEB [*apologetically*]. Isaac frets my patience.

ISAAC [*with stately superiority — to CALEB*]. The Committee should have visited thee in due season when thee was a young man. This conduct of thine comes of thy being a bachelor. [*ISAAC and JONATHAN enjoy a quiet Quaker chuckle at this sally.*]

JONATHAN [*as if summing up the matter*]. Joseph and Caleb have returned satisfactory answers. [*He turns and looks at DAVID who stands at the window.*] Thee has heard all, David? [*DAVID does not reply — his head droops.*] [*As if calling quietly.*] David. [*DAVID turns, his features betraying a powerful inner struggle.*] Joseph loves Rachel; is aware of the sacredness of the bond wherein he would enter; is of excellent station and ample means; and Caleb acquiesces. It seems hardly necessary to ask thee if thee consents.

[*DAVID looks at the floor and is so long before replying that the others look at him curiously, and then after a pause glance quietly at one another. RACHEL instinctively reaches for JOSEPH's hand.*]

ISAAC [*rising — quietly*]. David, thee heard Jonathan's question?

DAVID [*raising his head and looking straight before him*]. I heard it.

JONATHAN [*rising*]. Thee and Joseph have been so intimate. Thee seemed to have looked upon him almost as thine own son.

DAVID [*with a great effort*]. Ay.

JONATHAN. Well, David, does thee give thy consent?

DAVID [*the words being wrung from him*]. I — I cannot.

[*All are startled, but endeavour to repress a show of feeling. PRISCILLA and MEHITABEL rise at the right, RACHEL at the left.*]

CALEB [*also standing*]. David, thee cannot be in earnest?

DAVID [*looking before him*]. I have said it. [JOSEPH is regarding DAVID with a troubled countenance. JONATHAN and ISAAC whisper together.]

CALEB [*approaching DAVID at the centre*]. What is thy thought, David? Joseph loves Rachel.

DAVID [*sadly*]. Ay.

CALEB. And she loves him.

DAVID. I am persuaded so.

CALEB [*earnestly*]. Then what is thy objection, David Worthington? [DAVID does not answer.]

JONATHAN. Have patience, Caleb, we will come to it presently.

CALEB. What has come over thee, David? Heretofore thee approved.

DAVID [*brokenly*]. Ay, I did approve.

CALEB [*with spirit*]. Does thee intimate that there is some entanglement that prevents my nephew from marrying thy daughter? [DAVID is still silent — more gently.] Well, answer me, David. Does thee know of aught?

DAVID [*brokenly*]. Ay, there is an entanglement. [*Sensation — the next four speeches occur simultaneously.*]

RACHEL [*with a step toward DAVID*]. Father!

JOSEPH. Thee is mistaken.

PRISCILLA. It's not true!

CALEB. David, explain thyself.

RACHEL. Before thee speaks, father — and that all may hear [*she turns to JOSEPH*] I wish thee to know that no matter what is said, my faith in thee will never be shaken.

JOSEPH [*holding her hands to his breast*]. And my love for thee will always be the most sacred thing in my life. [*He turns to DAVID.*] Now, David, explain thy objection.

DAVID. It is right that thee should know — that all should know — why I cannot consent to this union. [*There is a pause.*] I did approve — ay, I even welcomed it, for I loved Joseph dearly.

CALEB. I believe thee, David.

DAVID [*raising his head*]. And I was proud of him.

CALEB. Ay.

DAVID. I thought him destined for some very special work.

JONATHAN [*reverently*]. He indeed seemed called of God.

DAVID. But he was found wanting.

JONATHAN, ISAAC, and CALEB [*almost in one voice — JONATHAN and ISAAC as though pondering — CALEB excitedly*]. Wanting!

DAVID. Ay, wanting!

CALEB. Thee must be more explicit.

DAVID [*to JOSEPH*]. A great opportunity was thine, and thee failed to grasp it.

RACHEL. But what is thy charge, father?

DAVID. The World's hosts have declared mutiny against the Lord's anointed. They have ensnared Joseph Baring until he has forgotten the teachings of his religion.

RACHEL. Joseph, this is not true?

JOSEPH. No. I have not become ensnared, and I have not forgotten our teachings.

DAVID [*sternly, but with the sadness of a great loss*]. Thee says thee has not forgotten our teaching, yet our Society has *disowned* men for less flagrant violations of its principles than thee is guilty of. [*The others look at one another in consternation.*] Thy vote in the Legis-

lature for troops, for money to equip them, and thine active participation in transporting them — can these things be considered aught but thy denial of the efficacy of non-resistance and thine advocacy of war?

CALEB. Thee hates slavery, David, no less than war. And cannot thee see that God has hung his balance in the sky and will require justice?

PRISCILLA [*to MEHITABEL*]. Even Whittier called slavery a crime which must be wiped out at any cost.

MEHITABEL. And the Lord will right the wrong, David, though it be with a sword of fire.

CALEB [*as DAVID shakes his head despairingly*]. David, we cannot see how this is to end, but is not our faith strong enough to believe that the evil of the moment will hold the seed of good that will endure through the centuries to come when the bitterness of the present is past and forgotten?

RACHEL. Father, the Assembly would have passed the bill, anyway.

JONATHAN. The Friends could not have prevented it.

ISAAC. And there were few other supporters of peace.

DAVID [*looking about him in amazement*]. Have ye all east aside, like shackles from the feet, the principles of the Friends? [*The others, except JOSEPH, relapse into silence.*]

JOSEPH [*with equal sternness*]. Nay, but sometimes the Lord tries the mettle of His people. I think this is such a time as that.

DAVID [*with deep self-contained power*]. For seventy years we had peace in this state, and we lived in harmony with the savages about us. Then as the years passed, the Friends were out-numbered by the World's People in the colony, and out-voted in the Pennsylvania Legislature. From that moment our policy of non-resistance was overthrown, and from that moment peace ceased to exist, and wars were frequent and disastrous

with the surrounding Indians.—Ye say the Assembly would have passed the bill. Ye say the Friends could not have prevented it. True, his vote might not have stemmed the tide, but he would have entered his protest against the contagion of battle. Ay, it would have been the voice of the Society of Friends speaking through him. [DAVID'S voice has risen almost prophetically. Now it drops to tense silence. His solemn words have shaken those on the stage.]

[The door on the right above the fireplace is quietly opened. Now in the impressive moment of silence, BENJAMIN stands in the open doorway, his watch in his hand. In the silence he crosses to his father.]

BENJAMIN. Father. [DAVID starts.] There's but a narrow space to make my train. My furlough expires in the morning. I couldn't leave without seeing thee once more.

JOSEPH [to RACHEL in a low voice of explanation]. I urged him, but he would not go.

BENJAMIN [to DAVID]. I beg thy forgiveness for the pain which I have caused thee.

DAVID [his breast heaving between love and sorrow]. My son!

BENJAMIN [with tears in his eyes]. Let me go with thy blessing.

DAVID [in suffering and sorrow, more than in bitterness]. Shall I invoke the blessing of God on thee when thee goes forth to shed thy brother's blood?

[BENJAMIN, his love for his father all but overpowering him, turns, shakes hands with CALEB, then crosses to JOSEPH and shakes hands with him. JONATHAN and ISAAC have withdrawn to the upper left.]

BENJAMIN [to RACHEL]. Sister!

RACHEL. God bless thee, Bennie, and keep thee safe. [They embrace. BENJAMIN is now left of centre.]

BENJAMIN [turning, hardly able to speak the words].

I am following my inward light, father, as thee follows thine, for the land I love better than life itself. . . . May He who is all good have thee in His keeping.

[DAVID *longs to take the boy in his arms, but cannot break through the iron shell of his reserve. With a last fond look at DAVID, BENJAMIN hurries upstage and goes out at the door.*]

DAVID [*as the door sounds,—crying out in anguish*]. Oh, my son, Benjamin, my son, my son! [*There is a moment's pause in which the man's deep sobs are heard. Then he turns on the others with the voice of a lion, although the sobs are still shaking him.*] My boy goes forth to offer sacrifice to Moloch and to sprinkle the horns of that idol's altar with human blood. [*Looks at JOSEPH.*] And he in whom my heart delighted, my more than son, gives him and thousands like him his aid and support. [*Turning to CALEB, JONATHAN and ISAAC.*] And ye ask me to give my daughter to him, and countenance such doings as fill the very eyes of God with tears.—Whatever ye may be, I am a Friend, the son of Friends, serving one Master, the Prince of Peace.—I cannot allow this marriage.

[THE CURTAIN FALLS]

[*It rises instantly. DAVID is seen leading RACHEL to the door, upper left. ISAAC and JONATHAN are going out of the French window, left. PRISCILLA and MEHITABEL are standing at the upper right. JOSEPH and CALEB, left of centre and right of centre respectively, stand facing each other at the front of the stage, as*

THE CURTAIN FALLS]

ACT III

ACT III

SCENE: *The drawing-room of the WORTHINGTON home, a colonial apartment of the utmost simplicity and dignity with its bare, cream-tinted walls and white columns and pilasters. There are no paintings on the walls nor bric-a-brac. It is the room the outside of which was seen in Act I.*

The main entrance is a mahogany door at the right of the rear wall, recessed outwardly and framed in with delicate white columns. It opens upon the stoop with the steps leading down into the garden. In the same wall, to the left of the door, are two nobly proportioned windows with small panes and semi-circular tops, the bottoms reaching almost waist high. A white fireplace and mantelpiece are in the right wall at the front of the stage. Above in the same wall, is a mahogany door, fitting into white frame-work, which leads to an adjoining room. In the left wall, a corresponding door leads to other rooms.

The furniture is of the purest carved Hepplewhite, of the maker's favourite shield design. The mahogany table, of which the sides can be folded down, occupies the centre of the room, with an arm-chair behind it facing the audience. A small chair is at the right of the table facing left; a similar chair in front of the table a little to the left of the centre, facing right. Before this last chair, a little away from the table, is a small sewing-stand. There are several other chairs, one in each of the upper corners of the room, and a similar one on each side, down stage.

Above the table is a silver hanging-lamp in keeping

with the room in its purity of line. A slate-coloured bell-pull about five or six inches wide is on the wall to the right of the windows. On the table are unwrapped bandages, old linen for lint, and a China bowl. On the mantelpiece are two silver candlesticks and a silver box for matches.

It is First Day (Sunday), July 21, ten days after the events of the preceding act, and at that glowing hour of summer evening before the sunset gives way to twilight. The main door at the back is wide open and the windows are raised.

As the curtain rises PRISCILLA, MEHITABEL, and RACHEL are sitting at the centre table; RACHEL in the left chair, facing right; PRISCILLA in the chair to the right of the table; and MEHITABEL at the back. MEHITABEL is knitting, PRISCILLA is scraping lint, and RACHEL is engaged on a piece of sewing.

PRISCILLA wears sprigged albatross cloth, a white ground with figures of blue. Her hair is arranged in the popular water-fall, with a wide-meshed net of black chenille.

MEHITABEL's dress is a delicate buff, with a snowy kerchief and cuffs of fine lawn. A lawn cap covers her hair.

RACHEL is gowned in sapphire-blue silk. Her hair, parted and drawn back at each side, is arranged in a long chignon with two small curls at the back.

MEHITABEL [to RACHEL — mildly expostulating]. But half his fortune!

RACHEL. Surely thee is not becoming worldly-wise, Mehitabel?

PRISCILLA. Rachel, it is an enormous gift!

RACHEL. How could father do otherwise, and be what he is?

MEHITABEL. And he persists in his purpose to establish a hospital?

RACHEL. If the Government will accept it. He would do more, but there are the men at the factory to be cared for.

MEHITABEL [*protestingly*]. Surely he doesn't propose to keep *them* on the payroll!

RACHEL. As long as he can.

PRISCILLA. Even though Peter and he have dissolved partnership? [RACHEL *nods*.]

MEHITABEL. And the factory is close to shutting down for lack of orders?

RACHEL. Yes.

PRISCILLA [*recovering her voice*]. Well, for once, Meeting House language fails to express my feelings!!!

RACHEL. Yet even I with all my yearning after vanities approve.

PRISCILLA [*bursting out*]. Of giving half one's fortune away for war relief; then planning to build a hospital; and then letting what's left dribble away in keeping workmen employed in a mill that has no work?

RACHEL [*laying down her work*]. Don't you understand? Father's heart is torn and bleeding. War is here, and he can do nothing now to oppose it. But he can relieve the distress caused by it even if it takes all that he has.

PRISCILLA [*dryly*]. Well, if he wants to get rid of his money, he's going about it in the right way.

MEHITABEL. But how will thee live?

RACHEL [*laying her hand across the table on MEHITABEL's*]. We'll find a way.—I tell you I was proud of father this morning in the Meeting, sitting up there in the elders' bench.

PRISCILLA [*meaningfully*]. Despite all?

RACHEL. Nay, Priscilla, *because* of all. Does thee think I yield to my father's commands because he is the stern parent and I the docile offspring of the kind I occasionally saw abroad in the artificial comedies of the

playhouse. Nay, there is that in him which compels reverence. And he is old, and has suffered greatly. [*With a change.*] Besides, I have not given up hope of reconciling him and Joseph. [*She rises and turns away to the left.*] But it is not so easy as thee might think. [MEHITABEL and PRISCILLA rise sympathetically.]

MEHITABEL [*going to RACHEL flutteringly*]. There, there, Rachel.

PRISCILLA. You poor dear! — you'll have me snivelling too if you don't stop.

RACHEL [*trying to laugh the mood away*]. It was a momentary weakness. I am myself again.

PRISCILLA [*as the three move back to their places at the table*]. Besides, no man's worth it. — Even if he is my brother — the jackanapes!

MEHITABEL [*reprovingly*]. Priscilla!

PRISCILLA [*as they seat themselves — to RACHEL*]. I believe we see him even less than thee does.

RACHEL [*her lips trembling*]. That's not at all.

PRISCILLA [*running on*]. Well, very little, anyhow. Why only a couple of nights ago, along came a telegram and, bounce! he was out of the house like a shot. [*With comical serenity.*] And we haven't seen him or heard from him since.

RACHEL [*concerned*]. Did he say where he was going?

PRISCILLA [*off-hand*]. Washington, I think. Everybody's going there these days. [*To the other two with a show of secrecy.*] Come hither. [*She draws an envelope from the little reticule on her wrist.*]

MEHITABEL. A letter. [PRISCILLA hands it to RACHEL.]

RACHEL [*pressing her hand to her heart*]. From Benjamin. — We haven't heard from him since he went back after his furlough.

PRISCILLA. Read it aloud.

RACHEL [*opening the letter and reading*]. "Dear old Priscilla:—"

PRISCILLA. Old, indeed! The greybeard!

RACHEL [*smiling through her tears — then proceeding*]. "Dear old Priscilla:—"

"Did thee see the moon last night and hear the night hawks and the owls? And in thy mind's eye did thee behold the gallant figure of a handsome youth doing sentry duty, the starlight upon his pale, young face? — That handsome youth, dear lady, was I."

MEHITABEL. Doesn't that sound just like the lad?

PRISCILLA. Always making a show of somebody or himself.

RACHEL [*continuing the reading*]. "Does thee ask if I am sorry to be a soldier? Nay, by all the gods and godlets, nay. Why, respected friend,—"

PRISCILLA. There he goes again!

RACHEL [*reading*]. "What was I at home? A Quaker turkey-cock strutting to school. What am I here? A son of Father Abraham. If I die, it is to have lived in his great heart, and to be immortal in the lives of those for whom I shall have — passed beyond. Besides, who knows, I may come back and be elected to Congress — in short from the sublime to the ridiculous —"

MEHITABEL [*wistfully*]. Wisdom and foolery and generous youth as prodigal as Maytime.

RACHEL [*reading once more*]. "This was merely to greet thee. So I will close with love to thee, dear Priscilla, and thy Uncle Caleb, and thy brother Joseph, and thy niece Harmony, and thy nephew William Penn, bless 'em both. And remember me to Mehitabel and Peter. And Priscilla, when thee sees Rachel, will thee give my dear sister my love? Do not mention me to my father."

Thee knows in what love I hold him, but I would not give him pain.

“Ever thy much obliged, very obedient, humble servant,

“BENJAMIN WORTHINGTON.”

[RACHEL lifts the letter to her lips. Then she gives it back to PRISCILLA.]

MEHITABEL [*working at her task*]. Maybe Joseph will see Benjamin in Washington.

PRISCILLA. Maybe and maybe not. Why, Joseph was going so fast, it was only the weight of his carpet-bag that kept him from flying.

[CALEB, hand in hand with little HARMONY and WILLIAM PENN, enters at the garden door. He wears his hat in the house. The children have bouquets of old-fashioned flowers. HARMONY is in green challie trimmed with black velvet ribbons. WILLIAM PENN wears a linen suit with brown jacket, and CALEB is in black.]

CALEB [*to the three women — whimsically*]. Which are the busiest, the hands or the tongues?

RACHEL [*going toward him*, PRISCILLA and MEHITABEL remaining seated]. What an unkind remark!

CALEB [*who has moved to PRISCILLA — his arm affectionately on her shoulder*]. Well, if thee had as much experience of my Priscilla as I.

PRISCILLA [*pressing his hand lovingly to her cheek*]. Uncle Caleb, thee well knows I am a woman of few words.

CALEB. Like the lady named Echo.

PRISCILLA [*glancing up*]. Who's she?

CALEB. A nymph who lives only in her voice.

HARMONY [*holding out her flowers to RACHEL*]. Here are some flowers for thee, Rachel.

WILLIAM PENN [*downright*]. I got some too.

RACHEL [*taking the flowers — and kissing HARMONY*]. Thee dearest baby. [*Laying the flowers for a moment*

on the table and lifting WILLIAM PENN up and kissing him.] And thee, adorable cherub!

WILLIAM PENN [*sourly*]. I hate bein' kissed.

PRISCILLA [*dryly*]. Wait till thee gets older.

CALEB. Is David at home?

RACHEL [*setting down WILLIAM PENN*]. Yes, in his room. I'll have Gladius call him. [*She draws the bell-pull.*]

WILLIAM PENN [*abruptly*]. I'm hungry.

RACHEL [*smiling*]. Famished pumpkin! [GLADIUS *enters at the door left.*] Will thee tell father that Caleb is here? And will thee see if there is some spiced cake? [*She puts the flowers in the bowl on the table.*]

WILLIAM PENN [*hastening across the stage*]. C'mon, Gladius.

HARMONY [*who has crossed to him — quaintly*]. Where are thy manners, William Penn?

WILLIAM PENN [*with manly scorn*]. I don't want manners. I want somethin' to eat.

GLADIUS [*amused*]. Come, chilluns. [GLADIUS *and the two children go out left.*]

PRISCILLA [*as she rolls up her work*]. Well, I've scraped enough lint for the whole Army of the Potomac.

CALEB [*banteringly*]. Peter should get thee a commission in the Ordnance.— Have ye seen him in his new major's uniform?

RACHEL. No.

CALEB [*grinning*]. Very impressive. But I think he would like it better if he were a Zouave and wore billowy red trousers and a fez.

MEHITABEL [*rising and indicating the articles on the table*]. We had better gather these up.

CALEB [*mischievously*]. Perhaps it were wiser. Isaac and Jonathan are coming, and if they behold thee working on the Sabbath —

RACHEL [*while she, MEHITABEL and PRISCILLA begin*

putting the table to rights]. Even father raises no objection to relief work on First Day.

CALEB [*genially*]. There's at least one good thing about this war.

MEHITABEL. What is that?

CALEB. It has given women something to do.

MEHITABEL. I think we have been much maligned.

RACHEL [*crossing with the bowl of flowers right front, and placing it on the mantelpiece*]. Is it not for this we are women: that in good or evil fortune we may help those whom we love?

PRISCILLA [*as she and MEHITABEL fold down the ends of the table*]. That may be *thy* idea. For this am I a woman, that I may trample on the worm, man!

[JONATHAN and ISAAC enter at the garden door.]

JONATHAN. The benediction of the Sabbath Day be upon all.

CALEB. Upon ye as well, Jonathan and Isaac.

ISAAC [*soberly*]. It is goodly to enjoy the perfect rest of First Day. [*The three women steal guilty glances at one another.*]

CALEB. Yes, we have been very comfortable here.

PRISCILLA [*at his side — softly*]. Thee is an old hypocrite. But I love thee. [*He pinches her cheek fondly.*]

RACHEL [*pleasantly — to JONATHAN and ISAAC*]. Won't ye be seated? [*They come into the room and take chairs.*]

MEHITABEL [*as she puts on her bonnet*]. We had better hasten. These summer showers come down before thee knows it.

[GLADIUS appears with the two children in the doorway left.]

GLADIUS [*to RACHEL*]. Marse David say he be down presen'ly.

RACHEL [*to WILLIAM PENN*]. Well, William Penn, are the pangs of thy hunger assuaged?

HARMONY [*blurring out*]. He stuffed some cake into his pocket. [*GLADIUS grins.*]

WILLIAM PENN [*turning on HARMONY*]. Tattle-tale! [*The two children stick their tongues out at each other.*]

CALEB [*sepulchrally*]. Oh the black cat with the shining scissors, and oh poor Harmony and William Penn Lightfoot who some day will never more have any extra tongue left! [*The two children laugh in high glee.*]

PRISCILLA. Come on, you ragamuffins. [*She takes HARMONY by the hand. MEHITABEL takes WILLIAM PENN.*]

RACHEL [*going along to the doorway with PRISCILLA and MEHITABEL and the children*]. Shall we meet to-morrow?

MEHITABEL. Yes, at my home. [*At the doorway to the others.*] Peace be with thee.

CALEB. And thee and thine, Mehitabel.

[*ISAAC and JONATHAN bow their heads as if in accord. MEHITABEL and PRISCILLA and the two children go out of the door and down into the garden.*]

RACHEL [*coming back into the room*]. It is getting a trifle darker. Shall I light the lamp?

CALEB. Oh, no, don't trouble thyself, Rachel.

[*DAVID enters at the doorway left. He seems to have aged somewhat, and his face is worn with grief. But if anything he is more silvery, and has the gentleness of one who has greatly suffered.*]

DAVID. Peace and welcome in my home. [*The three men rise and bow reverently.*]

RACHEL [*coming to her father*]. Can I get thee anything, father?

DAVID [*taking her hand and caressing it*]. Nay, my Rachel.

RACHEL. I will go to my room with thy permission.

DAVID. Say rather with my blessing. [*He kisses her upon her forehead and she turns and goes out of the room right.*] My daughter is my treasure.—I dreamed of a lofty happiness for her—union with the future leader of the Friends. Dreams, dreams—!

[*With a sigh he moves to the arm-chair at the back of the table and sits down. JONATHAN sits at his right; ISAAC draws a chair from near the window, and sits at JONATHAN'S right, a little farther away from the table. CALEB is in RACHEL'S chair at the left front of the table.*]

JONATHAN [*in a low tone to CALEB in the pause*]. Has thee knowledge of Joseph's mission to Washington? [*CALEB motions him to silence, but DAVID has heard.*]

DAVID. Nay, do not forbear. A small hurt is not felt in a greater one. What is the sound of a name compared with the disappointment of a lifetime of hope in the man? [*They are silent.*]

ISAAC [*clearing his throat—as if to change the subject.*] We are come for thy opinion. David, in a matter of weight.

DAVID [*looking up from his abstraction*]. And what is that?

JONATHAN [*taking a roll of names from his pocket*]. The admitting of new members to our Society.

DAVID. How can that be weighty? We have never had more than a few applicants in any year.

CALEB. The committee has not desired to trouble thee in thy trials, David—

JONATHAN [*continuing*]. Else would thee be more in touch with the circumstances.

ISAAC [*explaining*]. The applicants this year are greatly in excess of what they ever were before.

DAVID [*his face lighting up*]. That gives us larger hope.

CALEB [*gently*]. Not all men are pure-minded, David.

DAVID. Thee puzzles me.

JONATHAN [*showing the roll*]. It is surmised that some of these applicants desire an excuse to avoid military service.

CALEB [*nodding*]. As members of the Society of Friends, they would be deemed conscientious objectors.

ISAAC [*dubiously*]. An enlarged membership is desirable, of course.

JONATHAN. Naturally there is that side of it.

CALEB. What does thee say, David?

DAVID. I abhor war. With every protesting power of my soul I abhor it, and I am inclined with sympathy toward any man who shares my horror of its iniquity.

CALEB. Ay, that is known of all.

DAVID [*with a touch of fire*]. But we should allow no man in his dread of death or cowardice of battle to become a Friend, unless he be willing to die every death for the faith which he espouses. Has our Society endured all these years that in this, our supreme test, we should throw a protecting cloak round hypocrisy?

CALEB. Some of these applications may be in good faith.

ISAAC. But I am always suspicious of a sudden change of heart.

JONATHAN. Ay, especially in matters of this kind.

DAVID. The Society of Friends is no place for shirkers. Much as I deplore the soldier's occupation, which is avowedly to kill, I cannot but admire the spirit which sends him forth to do as a soldier that which he would never do as a man. His devotion sanctifies him, and makes him call sacrifice that which I call murder. Mis-

taken as he may be, he lives for a cause. [*Tossing aside the roll.*] What do these fellows live for?

JONATHAN [*to DAVID*]. What does thee suggest?

DAVID. That we admit no new members until the end of the war.

CALEB [*as if the matter were settled*]. Need anything further be said?

JONATHAN. I think not.

ISAAC. I agree.

JONATHAN [*to DAVID*]. Will thee allow us to speak of a more personal matter?

CALEB [*disarmingly*]. As bosom friends and not as a committee?

DAVID [*to CALEB*]. There is nobody to whom I should more willingly listen than to thee.

CALEB [*gathering himself together to speak*]. David — I — that is we — [*To JONATHAN.*] Nay, do thee tell him.

JONATHAN. We crave thy indulgence for touching upon so private a matter —

DAVID [*kindly*]. Proceed.

ISAAC. It concerns thy benefactions.

JONATHAN. Especially now that Peter and thee are no longer together . . .

CALEB. And thee is keeping the mill running at a loss . . .

JONATHAN [*deferentially*]. Thee is giving away so much.

ISAAC. Will it not impair thy fortune?

CALEB. Is thee doing justice to thyself, David?

DAVID [*his suffering heart overflowing. Laying his hands on those of CALEB and JONATHAN*]. Oh, my friends, my friends. [*Unable to go on, he rises, turns his back, and wipes his eyes.*] What is my paltry fortune compared with my hurt, for it is as deep as the sea? My boy, my boy! The day he asked me for my

blessing — how could I give it to him? And yet — [*In lamentation.*] Oh, my son, Benjamin, could I but have thee back in these arms, my little boy. Then would thee know how thy father loves thee.

CALEB [*gently*]. He knows thy love does not fail him.

DAVID. I have thought of him exposed to every danger — the terror by night, the pestilence, the devouring sword. And I have thought of the thousands of other parents whose boys are as dear to them as my boy is to me. Oh, could my money help to bring them back safe and sound! Could it help to restore them to their loved ones or to ease even in the slightest this misery that fills the world, with my two hands would I fling my gold from me — to the last ringing coin of it would I fling it away. [*He weeps.*]

CALEB [*sympathetically*]. Thee is not thyself, David.

DAVID [*with a cry*]. Nay, I am not myself, not David Worthington. I am but a pinch of fragile flesh and spirit among the millions who are bound to this fiery wheel that is racking the world. [*He sinks into his chair at the head of the table, bows his head upon his hands and sobs.*]

JONATHAN [*after a pause, laying his hand on DAVID's shoulder*]. Take courage. [*Pause.*] We'll see thee at some other time. Come, Isaac. [*JONATHAN and ISAAC go out at the door, upper right.*]

DAVID [*lifting his head and drying his eyes*]. Is thee still there. Caleb?

CALEB [*a little away from the table to the right*]. Ay.

DAVID. Thee sees how bowed I am — I that prided myself on my strength.

CALEB. It is the strongest that have the greatest capacity for suffering.

DAVID [*as if in confession*]. There are times when

in my anguish I almost forget my faith which makes me steadfast.

CALEB. There is a Providence in the world. What are we? A star-dust of dreams and thoughts and memories blown in the wind. Yet the stars live for ever.

DAVID. And what is life? — A broken cobweb, a vanished rainbow, a sunbeam through the mist, a soap-bubble — that before thee can say, "How beautiful!" bursts before thine eyes.

CALEB. Yet it bears miraculous lilies which turn to silver ere they turn to dust. [*RACHEL enters at the doorway, right.*]

RACHEL. Has the committee left?

CALEB [*whimsically*]. The better part of it, Rachel, both in numbers and in righteousness. [*A faint rumble of thunder is heard.*]

RACHEL. There is a storm brewing.

DAVID [*moving toward the windows at the back*]. Ay. "The Lord has His way in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of His feet."

CALEB [*also at the window — the sky is a leaden silver*]. I cannot question why the Friends have no artists, that they even discourage the attempt to copy the work of God when we can see such a sky as that.

RACHEL [*to her father — beside him*]. Thee has ever said that the Friends are artists of life. The forms that they mould and the pictures they paint are not statuary or paintings but the souls of men.

DAVID. Ay, and when I see how we mismanage the business of life, it make me impatient almost with the Father who permits such bungling. I speak rather of myself than of others. [*With much gentleness and humility.*] As never before do I realize the meaning of the words: "Judge not that ye be not judged."

CALEB [*turning sideways to face DAVID and RACHEL so that his profile shows against the lurid light.*] Out of

the bungling and suffering comes consolation, even as the Lord is marshalling His forces now to bring renewed life and strength to His creatures. [*There is a roll of thunder.*]

DAVID [*to RACHEL*]. Will thee be good enough to bring me the Book from my room?

RACHEL. Gladly, father. [*She crosses and goes out left.*]

DAVID [*to CALEB as the light becomes fainter*]. I have a leaning toward the Psalmist tonight. He was a man whose heart touched the length and breadth of sin and sorrow. But repentance brought him peace.

CALEB [*buttoning up his coat and turning up his collar as he makes ready to go*]. He is thy counterpart in more ways than mere name.

DAVID [*looking up, surprised*]. David, the Psalmist, my counterpart?

CALEB [*humorously*]. Well, he was very headstrong at times.

DAVID [*putting his hand on CALEB's shoulder*]. Ah, my friend, to be driven of the Spirit as an open boat in a great storm. Will thee blame me if my sail is whipped to ribbons? [*The room has gradually been growing dusky.*]

CALEB [*crossing to the doorway*]. Nay, with all my soul, I wish thee a safe home-coming and tranquillity of heart.

[*RACHEL enters, left, with an old, worn Bible.*]

RACHEL. Is thee going, Caleb?

CALEB. I can cross the gardens before the storm comes on. [*Making ready to go.*] Peace be to thee, David, and to thee, Rachel.

RACHEL. And to thee, Caleb.

DAVID [*gently*]. And to all who are suffering upon the stricken earth this night.

[*CALEB goes out, and DAVID closes the door.* RACHEL

crosses to the table and places the Bible on it. A strong rustling breeze comes in through the windows.]

RACHEL [*to her father*]. Had not the windows better be closed, father?

DAVID. Ay.

[He moves to the window near the door and pulls it down, and then draws down the other.]

[RACHEL meanwhile has crossed to the fireplace and procured some sulphur matches from the silver case on the mantelshelf. Then she moves back to the table.]

[DAVID seats himself in the arm-chair back of the table.]

[RACHEL draws down the hanging lamp on its chains over the table, strikes a match, and lights the lamp. Then she lifts the lamp back to its place. The light throws into strong relief the faces of father and daughter, leaving the rest of the room in comparative shadow. RACHEL sits on the chair in front of the table. DAVID opens the Book.]

[The sound of powerful hoof-beats outside is heard.]

DAVID [*raising his head*]. Somebody is riding hard.

RACHEL. I don't wonder, with the storm coming on. *[The sound of the hoofs ceases.]*

DAVID [*having found his place, begins to read aloud*]. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty . . ." *[There is the crash of the knocker at the door. RACHEL raises her hand to her heart.]*

DAVID [*raising his head*]. Who can that be?

RACHEL [*hastening to the door before her father can do so*]. I'll see. *[DAVID has come from behind the table and steps to the centre of the room. RACHEL opens the door and JOSEPH enters. He is haggard, making every effort to compose himself.] Joseph!!*

JOSEPH [*his eyes on her*]. Rachel. *[He pulls himself together, and stands right of centre facing DAVID.]*

There is a tense pause. His breath laboured.] I would not trespass upon thee, David, if I could help it.

DAVID [*in salutation, with grave gentleness and yearning restraint*]. Peace be to thee, Joseph.

JOSEPH [*gratefully*]. I thank thee.

RACHEL. When did thee return from Washington?

JOSEPH. Just now.

RACHEL [*intuitively*]. What brought thee in such haste?

JOSEPH. Necessity.

DAVID [*kindly*]. Thee speaks very gravely.

JOSEPH [*with difficulty*]. Ay, it is a grave matter.

DAVID [*benignly*]. If thee is in difficulty and I can help thee, speak thy need, Joseph, for all that I have is thine.

JOSEPH. Nay, David, the matter touches not me — not in that sense. I have a message for thee.

DAVID. From whom?

RACHEL [*in anxiety*]. Benjamin?

JOSEPH. Yes.

DAVID [*swaying under the shock of premonition*]. Is all well with the lad? [JOSEPH, *unable to speak, shakes his head.*]

RACHEL [*at the right of JOSEPH, taking a step toward him in dread*]. He is not . . . ?

JOSEPH [*divining her thought*]. No, he was living when I left.

DAVID [*his face pinched and drawn*]. Is the boy ill?

JOSEPH. Very.

DAVID [*in suffering — with an outcry*]. Give tongue to the worst of thy news, Joseph. Let us not linger in this agony of ignorance.

RACHEL. Was he wounded?

JOSEPH. Nay, camp fever.

DAVID. And did not let me know!

JOSEPH. He was conscious of thy displeasure.

DAVID [*in uncontrolled unhappiness and self-reproach*]. Nay, not displeasure, but great pain, Joseph. Could my boy feel that his father would abate one jot of love toward him? For my sternness hath God visited this upon me, that my lad should be near to death and yet dread to tell me.

JOSEPH. He sends his love.

DAVID. Has he good tendance?

JOSEPH. The best I could procure for him. [*His expression giving evidence of what he has seen.*] I had to work through hundreds of sick and wounded in the confusion of improvised hospitals before I could come to him. Oh, David, the sights,—the sights!

DAVID [*suddenly losing control of himself*]. War, thee demon, thee monster of madness, forced on men by the madness of the human race, I curse thee. Back to the fiery hell where thee belongs. With the deep agony of all who have ever suffered through thee, be thee for ever accursed.

RACHEL [*going to him, and laying her hand upon his arm*]. Let us be thankful that our boy still lives.

DAVID [*distractedly coming back to himself*]. Yea, — thou, oh Lord, quickenest me in my affliction.

JOSEPH [*to DAVID*]. Benjamin besought thy forgiveness, and bade me bring thee to him.

RACHEL. Why did thee not telegraph?

JOSEPH. I wanted to, but he feared a message might get lost,—not be delivered. The boy was beside himself to see David and thee, and to set his mind at rest I promised to go myself to fetch you.

DAVID. When is the next train?

JOSEPH. At eight o'clock.

DAVID [*drawing out his watch*]. That just gives us time.

RACHEL [*moving to the bell-pull and drawing it*]. I'll have Gladius pack thy bag. I'll get my own.

JOSEPH [*with dread and horror*]. That's what war is!

DAVID. Thee is learning now what I have always known.

[GLADIUS *enters left*.]

RACHEL [*to GLADIUS*]. Will thee pack father's bag as quickly as thee can?

DAVID. I'll help thee, Gladius. We shall make greater speed.

[GLADIUS and DAVID *go out left*. RACHEL *is right of centre*, JOSEPH *left*. *There is a momentary constraint between them. She lifts mute, tear-stained eyes to him. There is a pause while both look at each other. Then he gathers her into his arms.*]

RACHEL [*sobbing*]. Joseph.

JOSEPH [*stroking her hair*]. My dear one, my Rachel. [*In a low tone, rapidly.*] I have thought of thee always — every hour of the day, oh, my beloved; and at night filled with the moaning of wounded men while I sat beside Benjamin's bed.

RACHEL. If only I could have been there to minister to him.

JOSEPH. And yet I did so dread this homecoming with every turn of the wheels that brought me nearer to thee.

RACHEL. Will Benjamin recover?

JOSEPH. I hope so. He is young.

RACHEL. My little brother — sick unto death. It doesn't seem credible.

JOSEPH. Nay, a terrible and mysterious evil has swept into our lives, and we hardly know what it is except that we are suffering. My old horror of war was never so strong. I can almost agree with thy father that in no way, either directly or indirectly, should thoughtful men have a part in it.

RACHEL. It was because he thought thee wavered from that truth that he forbade our marriage.

JOSEPH. We shall find a way. [*With intensity of feeling.*] There is no power or domination that can keep thee from me. [*He takes her in his arms again.*] I love thee and only thee, thou beloved among women. [*Their lips meet. He releases her, reaches into his bosom, and takes thence a tea rose, which he gives to her.*]

RACHEL. A tea rose.

JOSEPH. The others are in the vase at Benjamin's bedside.

RACHEL. Let it be as a pledge of our love from him. [*She raises the flower in the palms of her hands to her lips.*]

JOSEPH [*taking her in his arms*]. "Set me as a seal upon thine heart."

RACHEL. "As a seal upon thine arm."

JOSEPH. "For love is strong as death." [*Their lips meet again. They step apart. The door opens and DAVID enters left.*]

DAVID. Such few articles as I had to lay out for Gladius, I have already chosen. Is thee prepared, daughter?

RACHEL. It will take me but a few minutes. [*Moving toward him.*] Father.

DAVID. Ay.

RACHEL. I have obeyed thee in all things not only because thee is my father and I honour thee, but because I love thee. I obeyed thee even when thee sundered me from Joseph.

DAVID. Gladly would I have given all that I had, could I have done otherwise.

[*JOSEPH has moved up stage. There are occasional flashes of lightning, but no storm yet.*]

RACHEL. Now thee must take back thy word. and consent to our marriage.

DAVID [*gently*]. Does thee not see that I cannot?

RACHEL [*imploringly*]. Thee has only me left now and Joseph, and Benjamin is ill. Who knows what will happen? Why should thee make all our lives so deeply unhappy? Has thee not often said, "Have we so long to live in this world that one pitiful and suffering human being should hawk at another?"

DAVID. Is not thy grief my grief as well? Does not everything that Joseph feels affect me too, he who was and is so close and so dear to me?

JOSEPH [*coming forward*]. David, our hope and aim are the same. It is the means employed about which we do not agree.

DAVID. But thee has approved of taking up arms.

JOSEPH [*bitterly*]. Nay, not approved. Only most unwillingly consented. For could I see the goal reached by another road, I would gladly follow that.

DAVID. Does thee not believe that peace is the best of all God's gifts?

JOSEPH. David, heed me. There is more than peace involved. Nothing but a refiner's fire can burn away this evil of slavery; and, David, emancipation will come.

DAVID. Does thee think so?

JOSEPH. It must, for our country, as Lincoln said, is the hope and light of the world. When I look into the future and think what a tremendous destiny awaits us . . . [*Rousing himself from his abstraction.*] But before that comes, the North and South must be united, and that can only be when slavery is wiped out.

DAVID. But the destruction of human life!

JOSEPH. And yet love itself is demanding it. This challenge of nineteen centuries, David, is an abolitionist older than our day. It is older even than the mountains or the sea. [*His voice thrilling with feeling.*] Ay, it was before Christ, before Moses, and it lives and will live, this bond of the brotherhood of man.

DAVID [*softly*]. Love and Peace are the same.

RACHEL. Joseph loves it as thee does, father. Even now he said to me his horror of war was never so great. He would almost agree with thee that no thinking man should in any way have aught to do with it.

DAVID. Oh, that my eyes might behold it, my ears hear it — Peace!

JOSEPH. Thee has dreamed of peace, so have I. Thee would have it now at no matter what cost. I would have it when our nation has grown so strong and so just that she proclaims peace with every flutter of her flag. [DAVID is moved, but unconvinced.]

RACHEL. Father?

DAVID [*gently*]. Yes, Rachel.

RACHEL. Has thee any other objection to Joseph?

DAVID. Nay, he was all that I could ask. [RACHEL without a word, lifts her hands in supplication.]

JOSEPH. David, will thee give me the cherished right to care for thy daughter? [*His lips trembling.*] I solemnly affirm that her happiness will be my chief concern.

DAVID. I believed I could not endure to see thee again. But thee may be right, for my eyes are becoming dim with long straining after the vision.

RACHEL. It is my life's happiness.

JOSEPH [*standing a little above her, and holding her left hand in his right*]. And mine.

DAVID [*overcome*]. I cannot resist thee longer. But should the day ever come when thee sees thy most cherished ambition dashed to the ground like a potter's vessel, then will thee understand me. [*He turns his back on them. JOSEPH raises RACHEL's hands to his lips.*] Make thyself ready, Rachel. I will see how Gladius is progressing. [*He goes out.*]

RACHEL. Out of the depths of affliction happiness comes, for this is the happiest moment of my life.

JOSEPH [*as he takes her in his arms*]. Loving thee is the greatest happiness I have known or shall ever know.

RACHEL [*gently disengaging herself*]. Now I must leave thee.

JOSEPH. Go, my dearest one, and the unseen cherubim follow thee with love.

[*He gently releases her hands. She goes out of the door left. JOSEPH looks after her a moment. It has grown much darker outside.*]

[*The beating of a horse's hoofs is heard drowned instantly by a peal of thunder pierced by a flash of vivid lightning. The horse's hoofs again are heard.*]

[JOSEPH hastily walks to the window and looks out. A second roll of thunder roars through the sky; and a flash of incandescent lightning shows the young man's figure at the window. The horse's hoofs are heard for another moment, and then are still.]

[JOSEPH comes back to the centre of the room. The knocker on the door resounds loudly. JOSEPH pauses and waits an instant. The knock is repeated as if with urgency. JOSEPH goes to the door and opens it.]

[ALDERMAN enters in riding cloak and soft hat. His appearance is that of a man who has ridden hard.]

JOSEPH. Peter — was it you riding?

ALDERMAN. Yes. I was looking for you.

JOSEPH. Come in, man, and rest.

ALDERMAN. There'll be time for that later.

JOSEPH. How did you know I was here?

ALDERMAN. The station master said you were headed in this direction. I had no time to lose on my way to headquarters.

JOSEPH. What are you doing there?

ALDERMAN [*throwing back his cloak, exhibiting his uniform*]. I'm a Major of Ordnance now.—Joseph, we've been defeated!

JOSEPH [*hardly realizing*]. What?

ALDERMAN. At Bull Run.

JOSEPH [*starting*]. The Union forces?

ALDERMAN [*in extreme bitterness*]. The army of the Shenandoah with Johnson was at Manassas; Jackson evacuated Harper's Ferry —

JOSEPH [*who has followed his thought — rapidly*]. With Beauregard at Bull Run —

ALDERMAN. McDowell with our men took the initiative — fell into the trap. — At five o'clock this afternoon —

JOSEPH [*in alarm*]. Well?

ALDERMAN. A telegram. The Union forces in full retreat!

JOSEPH [*stunned*]. Impossible!

ALDERMAN. It's a fact. The Army of the Potomac is streaming tonight toward Washington, thirty miles distant, utterly demoralized.

JOSEPH [*with sudden realization*]. Then the capital is in danger?

ALDERMAN. Yes.

JOSEPH [*dazed*]. I can't believe it.

ALDERMAN. Oh, it's a disgrace — an utter, terrible disgrace.

JOSEPH. The Confederates? What are they doing?

ALDERMAN. Johnson's forces are following McDowell's. The road is packed with fleeing men, artillery, and baggage wagons. Oh, the disaster is complete. [*He ends with an exclamation of disgust and pain.*]

JOSEPH. Defeated! — The next move?

ALDERMAN. Fresh troops.

JOSEPH. No escape from the conflict!

ALDERMAN. No, it must go on. The Union either lives or dies. And just now our country is facing her greatest crisis. [*JOSEPH, in the bitterness of his soul, sinks into a chair with his head in his hands.*] Come, come, this won't do.

JOSEPH [*dully*]. Defeated! Washington in danger!

ALDERMAN. I didn't come to tell you that. I've a message from the Governor.

JOSEPH. For me?

ALDERMAN. Yes. He offers you a commission.

JOSEPH [*turning*]. To a Friend?

ALDERMAN. He respects your religious scruples. But the country needs every man who will fight for her.

JOSEPH. Surely the Governor knows I cannot fight.

ALDERMAN. He doesn't want you to serve in the field, but in an administrative position. [JOSEPH *walks away in agitation*.] Men are flocking to the recruiting stations. They'll be incensed when news of the defeat spreads over the country. There'll be plenty of volunteers, and we must fit them out and stand behind them.

JOSEPH. But why has the Governor chosen me?

ALDERMAN. He has been impressed in the last few months with your executive ability and power to handle men.

JOSEPH [*in distress*]. I cannot consider his offer.

ALDERMAN [*throwing his cloak over his shoulder, preparatory to leaving*]. And you are willing to let other men enlist for a cause which you will not defend? [JOSEPH *in violent internal conflict clenches his hands*.] Men laid down their lives for the Union today at Bull Run.

JOSEPH [*raising his hands in desperation*]. And I sent them to fight an enemy I do not dare to meet myself.

ALDERMAN [*turning*]. Will you accept the Governor's commission?

JOSEPH [*with an outcry*]. No!

ALDERMAN. Is that the answer I'm to take back to him from an American?

JOSEPH [*stung to the quick — crying out loudly*]. Yes. Tell him I don't want his commission.

ALDERMAN [*shamed*]. All right.

JOSEPH [*wildly*]. But tell him I'm coming. I'm going to enlist in the ranks.

[ALDERMAN *understandingly grasps JOSEPH's hand, and wrings it. There is a wild crash of thunder. ALDERMAN hurries out. The wind is heard as the door opens and closes.*]

[*In great excitement JOSEPH paces the floor. There is another crash of thunder and a flash of lightning. When the sound has rolled away, the rapid beating of the horse's hoofs is heard, fading quickly in the distance.*]

[RACHEL, *carrying her pelisse and bonnet, opens the door right, enters, and beholds JOSEPH's agitation.*]

RACHEL [*throwing her pelisse and bonnet on a chair*]. Joseph, what has happened?

JOSEPH [*taking her into his arms and speaking rapidly*]. Listen, dear. Before I say anything else, I want thee to know that I love thee — that I shall never love anybody in this world but thee.

RACHEL [*in anxiety*]. Thee frightens me.

JOSEPH [*running on*]. Thee is the beauty and glory of my life, and for thee would I give up everything I am or have. But dear, there is another love in every man's life.

RACHEL. I don't understand thee.

JOSEPH. The greatest love of all.

RACHEL. Joseph, thee is beside thyself.

JOSEPH. Love of country. I'm going to leave thee, dear, for that greater love.

RACHEL. What is thee saying?

JOSEPH. We've been defeated.

RACHEL. How?

JOSEPH. Today at Bull Run. The country is staggering under the blow.

RACHEL [*intuitively — with a cry*]. Thee's not . . . ?

JOSEPH. Yes. I'm going to enlist.

RACHEL. No, no, no!

JOSEPH. Can I stand by when my country needs me?

RACHEL. Thee knows what it will mean to father?

JOSEPH. Yes, and to thee and to me. And that's why I'm bidding thee good-bye.

RACHEL [*bursting into tears, and clinging to him*]. I don't want thee to go. See what has happened to Benjamin, and now thee, too! Oh, my dear, my loved one!

JOSEPH [*holding her close*]. Little woman, don't make it harder for me.

RACHEL. But thee is a Friend, and conscientious scruples are respected.

JOSEPH. Ah, Rachel, my own, if I were a Friend as thy father is, then might my scruples be respected, nay, more, might I respect them myself. But thy father was right. I *have* allowed the World to creep into my life — the great and thundering World that I am going to fight for, because I love it more than I love my church.

RACHEL. Thee cannot! Nay, thee will not!

JOSEPH. What must be, must be.

RACHEL. The Meeting will disown thee. And I will lose thee and all.

JOSEPH. Never will I cease loving thee.

RACHEL [*with broken-hearted entreaty*]. But think of me who need thee so much. Don't leave me. Don't go away from me — I am alone. I love thee. Thee is all that I have in life, or can ever have. — Don't go, don't go.

JOSEPH [*tenderly*]. Listen, dear, there was once a Cavalier who wrote a poem to his beloved when he was starting for the wars. Thee knows the lines:

“I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.”

[RACHEL *breaks down and weeps*.] Now when I go,

let me see thee smiling, and send me forth as the Spartan women sent forth their men — to come back *with* their shields or *on* them. For that's the kind of woman I want thee to be.

RACHEL. I can't do it, I can't, I can't.

[DAVID *enters from the left. With a violent effort RACHEL composes herself, and turns right.*]

DAVID. I am ready now if ye are. Gladius is waiting with the covered carriage. Perhaps we can yet outride the storm.

JOSEPH [*wildly*]. And may we all outride the storm. — David, thee did even now consent to my marriage with Rachel, because thee felt thee could forgive what I had already done. But this thee will not forgive if I know thee.

DAVID [*alarmed*]. What has happened?

JOSEPH [*rapidly*]. Thee is of a school that will avoid battle because thy purity is so great it needs not the terrible heat of conflict to refine it. But I, David, am of the world, dross of its dross. My dream's bound up in old flesh that strives and struggles and falls and out of blood-letting and agony builds up such white habitation as it has.

DAVID [*apprehensively*]. Thee is distraught, Joseph.

JOSEPH [*with a cry*]. Ay, distraught, when my country calls me and I must heed her call.

DAVID. Unhappy boy, what does thee say?

JOSEPH. I'm going to take Benjamin's place.

DAVID [*terribly*]. What!

RACHEL. Joseph!

JOSEPH. I have promised to enlist.

DAVID [*with a cry*]. Thee too is preparing to shed thy brother's blood?

JOSEPH [*torn with the conflict — crying out*]. Ay, if my country demands it.

DAVID. No more shall thee come near me.

RACHEL [*wringing her hands*]. Father — Joseph —

DAVID. I see a torrent of blood rushing in between thee and me, and it is thy impious hand that has opened the flood-gates.

JOSEPH. Oh, forgive me, thou most faithful among men.

DAVID [*with utter broken-hearted finality*]. I would cast thee out of my sight for ever.

JOSEPH [*pulling himself together*]. Now, Rachel, I have only thee left. If we are to part, let me remember thee as a daughter of America.

RACHEL [*steeling herself — swaying*]. Go — Joseph — and fight — for — our country.

[*He sweeps her into his arms and kisses her. A tremendous clap of thunder is heard, stabbed by flashes of lightning, and the storm breaks.*]

[*JOSEPH hurries from the room, slamming the door behind him.*]

[*RACHEL sinks to the floor.*]

DAVID [*flinging out his arms*]. Oh the patience and forbearance of the Eternal!

[THE CURTAIN FALLS]

ACT IV

ACT IV

SCENE: *The interior of the Friends' Meeting House, — a small place of assembly hardly larger than a living-room. The scene is almost, but not quite, triangular in shape. There are three walls. That on the left is the shortest. The next shortest wall is on the right. It extends from the front of the stage on a considerable angle to the rear where it meets the longest wall of the three. The wall at the right represents the front of the room; the longest wall the side of it; the left wall, a small part of the back.*

Along the wall at the right is a high desk, which extends almost across the front of the Meeting House, and is reached by three steps at each end. Below it are two high wooden pews, the upper one a step below the desk; the lower one a step lower still, but yet one step higher than the floor. The desk is for the clerk; the two pews, for the principal elders and the approved ministers. Over the clerk's desk, in the wall, is a high window of antique design. Through it the sunlight streams, lighting up one portion and then another of the interior as the time passes.

A little above the height of a man's stature on the longest wall, but not occupying its entire length, is a small, narrow gallery. In the same wall, comparatively near where it joins the right wall, is a long small-paned window reaching from the floor to the ceiling. In the same wall are two other windows which reach from the floor to the gallery and are then continued above the gallery to the ceiling. Nearer the front of the stage in the same wall is a small triangular structure, the apex coming into the Meeting House proper, and the two sides hav-

ing swinging doors which lead into the vestibule. The men enter and leave by the right hand door of these two; the women, by the left door.

At the end of the gallery nearest to the left is a door which is supposed to lead by a set of steps down to the vestibule. This gallery door is directly over the vestibule doors on the floor of the Meeting House.

Facing the clerk's desk and the two high wooden pews are the few plain wooden pews for the small congregation. They are separated by a centre aisle which is at right angles to the high pews facing the congregation and is supposed to divide the room into two equal parts. As but a segment of the Meeting House is on view, the aisle runs down to the front of the stage at the centre, so that while the benches above the aisle, up stage, are entire, the front of the stage cuts the benches below the aisle, and only a portion of them is visible. The men sit on the upper side of the aisle, near the windows; the women on the lower side, near the front of the stage. Between the men's pews and the wall is a narrow side-aisle, and from the vestibule doors a cross aisle cuts down to the centre aisle. The junction of the centre aisle and the cross aisle affords a small unoccupied space at the centre of the stage.

There are but three women's pews, the first one being the longest; the third is the shortest, having space for but two seats. Just to the left of the last women's bench, the main aisle reaches the front of the stage at the centre, where the cross aisle from the vestibule joins it.

The benches are unpainted deal. One or two of the women's benches have a cushion of sage-green moire antique. There is a green carpet runner of sprig in the main aisle. In the open space where the main aisle and the cross aisle meet at the centre of the stage is a brown sheepskin. At the windows are green Venetian blinds and white shades. A little box is fastened to the railing

on the men's side. In it are kept the minutes of the Meeting.

It is the afternoon of Fourth Day (Wednesday), ten days after the events of the preceding act.

JONATHAN LEWIS, the clerk, is sitting at the centre of the desk facing the congregation. In the pew below him, a little to his right, is DAVID WORTHINGTON, likewise facing the congregation. CALEB SCATTERGOOD sits in the same pew at DAVID's left, upstage. The lowest pew facing the congregation is unoccupied.

In the first pew for women is MEHITABEL EVANS. In the pew behind her is PRISCILLA with little HARMONY at her right. The last seat on the women's side, downstage near the centre, is not occupied.

Little WILLIAM PENN LIGHTFOOT is in the front pew on the men's side, upstage. In the pew behind him ISAAC PETTIGREW sits. The other pews behind ISAAC are occupied by a few other Friends, their faces shaded by their wide-brimmed beaver hats.

In the gallery almost over the first pew for the men is PETER ALDERMAN. He is in uniform and has taken his hat off. To his left is GLADIUS, who also has no hat on.

The women are in the costume of the Friends. MEHITABEL wears a grey silk; PRISCILLA also is in grey silk with girlish touches wherever she could weave them in. Both MEHITABEL and PRISCILLA, and even HARMONY, wear their bonnets, which they remove when they rise to speak. The men in the congregation and those facing them are in the usual garb of the Friends and all wear their hats, even little WILLIAM PENN.

As the curtain rises some of the congregation have their heads bowed as in prayer. JONATHAN is bent over his desk, writing.

There is an impressive silence; then RACHEL enters from the women's door from the vestibule. She is dressed with rich but simple elegance, her gown being of lustrous

black silk with a rippling skirt expanded over a crinoline. She comes down the cross aisle, and, amid the gaze of the congregation, takes her place in the last pew on the women's side, which is near the centre of the stage, the shortest one of the three. She removes her bonnet as she takes her seat.

There is a pause.

JONATHAN [*looking up and readjusting his spectacles*]. We have come to the Eighth Query in our testimony of Divine leading. The Eighth Query. [*He turns to the paper in his hand.*] Are ye faithful in maintaining our Christian testimony against all war, as inconsistent with the precepts and spirit of the Gospel? [*He sits down.*]

ISAAC [*after a short silence rises, and removing his hat lays it on the seat beside him. He is an impressive and reverent figure as he closes his eyes and speaks*]. Babylon requires of us a song. Our captor shouteth and maketh merry. But how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? Oh Zion, whence cometh my help? [*A short pause, then with increasing exaltation.*] Though horses and chariots encompass me about as the very sands of the sea-shore for number, yet on the wings of the morning will I fly to the hills whence cometh my strength. Though affliction bind me, my tongue shall cleave to the roof of my mouth ere I forget thee, oh Jerusalem! [*There is a short pause. ISAAC sits down, puts on his hat, and bows his head over his hands which rest on the top of his cane.*]

MEHITABEL [*after a pause removes her bonnet, showing the white lawn cap covering her hair. Rising, she stands trance-like, her hands hanging clasped before her*]. Every heart hath its sabbaths and its jubilees. From the lowest waters of sin and despair it rises to mounts of transfiguration. Yet there are inscriptions written there which can be seen only when the tides are

out. [*Raising her clasped hands to her bosom.*] Ay, Lord, they are cut with the keen two-edged sword of Thine anger and Thy righteous judgment. [*Holding out her hands as in petition.*] There is no mercy but in Thy love. Yea, let them that furtively prowl in dark places crush the thorns upon my brow if only they may know the wisdom that lies in Thine eternal law and the beauty and harmony of Thy justice and peace. [*Slowly she drops her hands. After a pause she sits down and puts on her bonnet.*]

JONATHAN [*rising and keeping his hat on*]. We are in a time of great excitement when a heinous crime is being committed against the Lord and the teachings of His church. War is here. The sun is eclipsed by the smoke of battle. Many of our dead at Bull Run yet lie unburied. The Society of Friends must stand firm for the promotion of peace and the principle of non-resistance. We must hold fast to our faith.

ISAAC [*rising, his hat on his head*]. Yea, we are in a turmoil. But could the spirit and zeal of George Fox animate the Friends of today, they might rock this state, ay, and the nation too. Men wrestle in darkness; they see not the Prince of Peace.

CALEB [*benignly*]. But there's a glimmer of hope. The noblest things are often born of suffering. God can bring a lasting good out of the passing evil.

DAVID [*rising as CALEB sits down, with head erect and covered. He has the appearance of one who has been driven by great storms, but is holding fast to his course though it is breaking his heart*].

[*As he begins to speak JOSEPH is seen through the windows walking toward the left on his way to the vestibule door.*]

Idle words and profitless. We have come before the Judgment Seat today to clear ourselves of the charge of following after Baal or not. [*A deep silence rests upon*

the assembly. ISAAC puts his hand to his ear.] Each in the silence of his own heart must answer the question. Thus for our spiritual purification have we answered these queries since the days of Fox. But not as individuals do we come here this afternoon. Our Society is on trial.

[JOSEPH *has entered the vestibule.*]

CALEB [*gently*]. Surely not *all* our Society, David?

DAVID. Ay, it has a duty to discharge against such of its number as do violate its principles, and make its name a byword.

CALEB [*mildly*]. Is that duty so severe as to put our Society to its defence?

DAVID. Ay, for if we fail in it, we shall not only discredit ourselves, but make a mockery of the revered dead by grace of whose steadfastness we have survived. [*The tension in the Meeting House is growing greater.*]

JONATHAN [*leaning over his desk — to DAVID*]. Has thee a report to make? [JOSEPH *enters through the men's door from the vestibule.*]

DAVID. I have. [*Pause.*] And he whom it concerns is here now.

[JOSEPH and DAVID *look at each other as if across a great distance.*]

[*For a moment JOSEPH stands at the door while the eyes of all are bent toward him. Slowly, in the silence, he walks up the aisle, his hat on his head. Reaching the front pew, he turns to the right, and gently strokes WILLIAM PENN's head as he passes to the front pew facing the congregation and sits down.*]

JONATHAN [*to DAVID, gently, as if recalling him*]. We are prepared to hear thee, David.

DAVID [*coming back to himself with an effort*]. Ay. — There — there be many today who are drifting toward the world and its customs. Though but one meadowlark die, all Spring feels the lack of its singing. Though but

one member leave our Society, we are all touched by it. For are we not all one bundle of life? [*He cannot go on.*]

ISAAC [*rising and quoting*]. “And the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.” [*He sits down.*]

DAVID [*resuming with more self-control*]. When the obscure leave us, they leave a hurt here in our hearts. But none is so conspicuous in his conduct as he who by his uprightness, his strength and nobility of character, his devotion to his faith, and his influence in the community, had won our most ungrudging esteem — ay, and love. [*His arms are outstretched in yearning towards JOSEPH. JOSEPH bows his head. Slowly DAVID's hands fall. He raises his head.*] I mean Joseph Baring, as ye know.

CALEB. But Joseph is still one of us.

DAVID. In bodily person, perhaps, but not in heart. In the last few months he has departed from the paths of his fathers, and is drawing others also. It is with deep concern and sadness that I bring in my report as ordered by you.

JONATHAN. Does thee prefer a charge?

DAVID [*with difficulty*]. Ay, I do.

[*JOSEPH starts to his feet and turns, gazing up at DAVID. Suppressed excitement sweeps through the congregation.*]

JONATHAN [*to DAVID*]. Will thee specify it?

DAVID. He persists in his course, and will not turn back. He not only failed of the opportunity to give testimony against armed force before the Legislature, but aided in forwarding troops.—All this I could forgive, ay, and did, though my heart was wrenched within me. But this I cannot forgive: as the crowning act of his disobedience, he has enlisted and will bear arms himself. [*DAVID sits down and bows his head in his*

arms with a gesture of intense grief. JOSEPH also sits down, his head bowed.]

JONATHAN [*looking kindly at JOSEPH*]. Has thee aught to say in thy defence, Joseph Baring?

JOSEPH [*looking up at JONATHAN as he rises,—quietly and with repression*]. David has given the gist of the matter.

JONATHAN [*as JOSEPH remains standing*]. Is there naught thee could add? [*JOSEPH is silent — his features drawn and haggard.*]

CALEB [*gently*]. Speak, Joseph, that the Meeting may understand and weigh thy leading.

JOSEPH [*after a pause, as though communing with himself*]. At any crisis man is lonely. The roads of the soul lie before him where no light is, and no hand to guide him. One is the settled path of his fathers, and its sunlit course promises a happy goal. The other is in shadows, and rises into mists decked with agony and a veil of stars. To what goal it leads he knows not, only that for *him* it is the loftiest that life can hold. Which path will he choose by the light which leads him on, he knows not whither? For both roads he cannot tread. [*Coming back to his auditors.*] Ye are trying me today according to the custom of our Society. Why? Because I have left the path of my fathers and am allying myself with the World's People in a great cause. Could I have gone so far, unless I had some inflaming love to recompense me—love that can soothe a tormented heart; love that can free the captive; love that can break all bonds!

[*GLADIUS in the gallery is weeping softly.*]

[*RACHEL is drinking in JOSEPH's words as if she, too, were being led along the same path of suffering.*]

This is the thought that sustains me and my recompensing love, that there is no stronger or purer passion of the soul than love of country. It is the door to that

love of humanity which some day shall make all the world free. In this struggle, it is not striving for wealth or for land. Nay, but for a vision of human destiny in the heart of man that, in the words of President Lincoln, the weight may be lifted from the shoulders of all men *everywhere*.— Building its life upon this dream of freedom, our nation is assailed from within her own walls. She is staggering under mighty blows. She is calling upon her sons for defenders. Who will refuse to rally to her cry when in her defence the humblest becomes strong? We are at the turning point. We cannot let civilization slip back. Europe looks to us for direction. Wistfully history is waiting the outcome. The cause of liberty halts.— In this light I have left the sunny lowland road of convenience and well-being, and I have turned to the path on the mountain side. There I have found a new interpretation for our religion — a religion of love. If I have left one cause, I have taken up another and perhaps a greater one. For my cause is the preservation of our nation as the hope of the world.

DAVID [*rising*]. Back of every human endeavour is the arm of the Almighty, which will give victory to truth. This is a struggle for men, for souls, and God himself will give us the victory as He did over the Assyrians of old, not with horses and chariots.

JONATHAN. Nay, David, let him complete his defence.— Speak on, Joseph. We would hear thy whole argument.

JOSEPH [*as DAVID sits down*]. I have nearly finished. In this maelstrom, one seems very puny and doubts assail him. But our faith teaches us that each must follow on to the end with unflinching courage as his inward light reveals the way. Will he find more hate? Will the striving be worth while? Will the vision avail? [*Pause.*] Ay, the spirit is indomitable. [*Raising his*

hand as if in the act of affirmation.] Yea, I affirm it. [*His hand slowly drops.*] I have seen Bull Run, and the faces of the dead. The glory of war is not there. It is in the hearts of men who will die that things may live which are greater than life.

JONATHAN [*to JOSEPH*]. I admit thy sentiments are lofty. Thee has not been prompted by a mean motive. But thee also knows thee is speaking contrary to the tenets of our Society.

ISAAC [*rising*]. The Friends must stand together on this question, and all that pertains to it. Unity in essentials must still be our motto.

DAVID [*laboriously*]. Isaac speaks — my — mind.

CALEB [*rising*]. Don't let us forget that less severity of discipline has existed in our Society in the last quarter of a century, and disownment is rarely resorted to now. The bond of unity is of the spirit rather than in the outward expression. In the past, that we might grow strong, we needed to be separate and distinct in our communion, in our dress, and in our speech. But liberty in non-essentials now prevails, and in time we shall hardly know one another by the outward sign. The younger generation is realizing as our older one does not, that charity covers all. A new tolerance and a new vitality will come to our Society the more we exercise this principle. [*With much sweetness and reverence.*] I speak as an old man looking back over the life he has lived, and also glimpsing something of the future which is denied to him, but which will be the heritage of our younger members. The next one hundred years will determine whether the Friends' testimony against war will eventually prevail or not. [*With some show of spirit.*] I cannot but think that all great wars for liberation are in the ultimate view wars against war.— I am a Friend, born a Friend, but were I younger, brethren

and sisters, were I younger, as Joseph Baring is, I fear I should be led to do as he is doing.

MEHITABEL [*rising as CALEB sinks into his seat*]. Yea, the precept of the Galilean is the ideal toward which the whole world is moving. I see it coming — ay, as tomorrow's sun. [*She shades her eyes as if from too bright a light.*] But not until men have wasted their lives, and generations have come and gone. Nations will rise and fall, but He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. In His good time He will bring to pass that which He ordained from the beginning.

DAVID [*rising*]. This is no time to equivocate. Non-resistance is the *fundamental* belief of our Society. If we give that up, we are as mariners without chart or compass.

PRISCILLA [*springing to her feet and bursting out. The congregants look at one another in consternation. All the dignity of her future years shines through her as she speaks*]. Thee would disown my brother! Thee would even strip him of all that he holds most dear! But thee cannot stay the resistless spirit of youth, David Worthington! It is striving for an ideal just as thee is. Ay, it too hath a heavenly vision, and is faithful to it. [*She stands bravely facing DAVID.*]

DAVID [*looking at the young girl with tenderness, yet with the unbending firmness of a prophet*]. There are many visions in the heart of man, my child; but this Society hath but one vision. A man is either a Friend, or he is not. He cannot belong to the Society of Friends, and yet bear arms.

PRISCILLA [*with feminine logic*]. Our people have been Friends as long as thine, David.

DAVID. Ay, and they rise up from their very graves to stand with me against their son who is violating the principles by which they lived.

PRISCILLA [*the tears starting to her eyes*]. Thee would hold to a principle even at the sacrifice of my brother's life.

DAVID [*with deep feeling*]. Nay, Priscilla, say rather at the sacrifice of my own. [*Looking down with thwarted love at JOSEPH.*] For I had tenderly hoped thy brother would be the instrument whereby I might live into the future when this body should be no more. [*PRISCILLA sinks into her seat sobbing.*]

CALEB [*rising*]. It is a serious thing to deprive a member of his birthright. Have we not come to a time when moderation should be employed instead of extreme measures?

DAVID [*with a deep feeling of indignation*]. Extreme measures indeed! Are not the precepts of our Society the extremity of all extremes? For these principles from the time of Fox down, have we not spoken wherever we could, in churches, in barns, at market crosses? For them have we not been pilloried and had our ears clipped? In the past two hundred years have we not suffered in prison and at the stake? Has any form of persecution that the brutality of an unenlightened age could devise been spared to us? All of this have our people endured with a constancy and patience that have won the respect of the world. And why have we persisted? Why? Because we believed we were a vessel containing a spirit of healing for mankind if they would but avail themselves of it. Ay, we have been a leaven for humanity. Call this extreme measures if ye will. It is but holding aloft the banner of an imperishable ideal.

RACHEL [*rising, and facing her father*]. Nay, father, thee is driven by an idea which in less tolerant times would have made thee too a persecutor. [*Bitterly to the other Friends.*] Oh ye lovers of ideas! It is the spirit which gives life and the letter which kills. Aim

for peace if ye will. But why turn from your paths of peace to harry one to whom greater calls have come, and who steps forth from the Meeting House into the great Assembly and the conflicts of the world? [*With passionate entreaty.*] I am only a woman, unskilled in your argument, but one thing I know. That which women have known from the first shadows of time. Who stand at the place where your extremes meet in conflict, but we? Who so endure the agony of your contentions as we? Ye speak of how precious life is. Who knows it better than women? And what are ye doing now but destroying life? — thee, my father, striking at the man I love. But does thee strike at him alone? Nay, it is at me, at thine own stricken heart, unhappy man. Does not the grave of my brother, thy son, call to thee for mercy and for a moderating of this, thy ferocity of zeal?

DAVID [*the tears rolling down his cheeks.*] Nay, nay, oh, my beloved! It is the grave of that beautiful lad that calls on me to stand here, ay, though the heavens fall, and to utter my protest against that which brought him to his death. [*There is silence of deep feeling in the congregation. No one stirs — as if the crisis of decision were being reached.*]

CALEB. Nay, David, wait. Perhaps a way will yet be found. [*To JOSEPH.*] Is there no doubt or anxiety in thy mind, no cloud obscuring thy vision?

JOSEPH. No, not now. I have pondered well. My heart has been torn by the conflict, but a greater pity has purged me of my fears.

CALEB. But has thee no doubt as to the wisdom of thy future course? There's always a penalty for leaping ahead. Every step becomes a call to controversy.

JOSEPH [*with intense feeling*]. Courage and fear are but a hair's breadth apart. I am willing, nay, glad to lay down my life, if that be required of me, that a united country and peace be our legacy to posterity.

ISAAC. Then thee will not retract?

JOSEPH. Nay, I cannot. [*With more firmness, yet reverently.*] And God helping me, I will not.

JONATHAN. This, then, is thy final answer?

JOSEPH [*with finality*]. Ay, that a religion of peace and good-will is not incompatible with the righteous employment of force.

ISAAC AND VARIOUS OTHER VOICES IN THE ROOM [*in tones of shocked dismay*]. Oh! [CALEB sinks into his place with a gesture of hopelessness.]

DAVID [*slowly rising and summoning his last reserve of strength for his duty as he sees it*]. Can the issue be made more clear? [*There is a complete silence of assent in the congregation.* To CALEB.] I ask thee, Caleb,—on thy faith as a Friend.

CALEB [*after a struggle — with more feeling than he has ever exhibited*]. Nay, he has spoken his own doom. I assent to his disownment. [*A murmur in the congregation.*] And yet, before all this Meeting, I say that he has behaved as I would have had him do. [*There is complete silence.*]

JONATHAN [*slowly and with impressive dignity, letting each word sink into the minds of his hearers*]. It is then the sense of this Meeting that Joseph Baring, having been given an opportunity to clear himself of the charge of advocating war, and furthering it directly and indirectly, and to acknowledge his fault, and refusing so to do, is disowned by this Meeting, and deprived henceforth of all the privileges and enjoyment of association in the Society of Friends.

[*The following actions are simultaneous:* ALDERMAN in the gallery starts angrily to his feet, and, followed by GLADIUS, goes out through the door. Realization comes over JOSEPH like a blow. ISAAC and the few congregants behind him on the men's side rise and confer in a small group in the aisle near the window.]

PRISCILLA [*in tears*]. Oh, Joseph!

RACHEL. Father!

DAVID [*passionately — raising his head and looking up as in petition*]. Why hast Thou required this thing of me? [*Breaking down utterly.*] Lord, Lord, affliction is upon me. I am in sore distress. My son in whom my eyes delighteth, on whom the mantle of opportunity fell with such widening scope, the green tree in which nested all my dreams — now thee lies prostrate with broken branches, and it was *my* hand, the hand that loved thee, that cut thee down.

JOSEPH [*turning to DAVID*]. I have no bitterness toward thee, David.

DAVID [*hardly hearing him*]. Into a thousand pieces have I shattered the vessel that was more precious to me than life — the golden bowl is broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, the wheel broken at the cistern, and life forevermore is a thing of potsherds. Now is my hope lost for ever and I am alone.

RACHEL. Father, thee will not let this stand!

DAVID. On the great pages of time it is marked — in letters of blood and fire for all to read.

CALEB. Calm thyself, David. Grief o'ershadows thy soul, but the hour of fate has not yet broken upon thee.

DAVID. Oh, Caleb, it is the end for me.

RACHEL [*to CALEB*]. What happiness was mine, Caleb, and now what despair!

[*JOSEPH in his place involuntarily stretches out his arms toward RACHEL; then he turns toward the windows with stony features.*]

CALEB. Ay, girl, life continually wavers between happiness and despair, and it was thy ill-fortune to stand, as thee said, where the conflicting forces met.

[*JONATHAN meanwhile has come down from his desk, and placed the minutes of the Meeting in the minute box.*]

He then moves toward the front of the stage. The congregants are leaving the room.]

HARMONY [*to PRISCILLA*]. Don't cry, Aunt Priscilla, thee makes me cry too.

WILLIAM PENN [*sturdily — to PRISCILLA*]. Never mind, I'll pectect thee.

PRISCILLA [*laughing through her tears and half smothering the little fellow in her impetuous embrace*]. My brave defender!

[ISAAC comes to the front of the stage by the cross-aisle.]

[ALDERMAN and GLADIUS behind him enter from the men's side of the vestibule door.]

MEHITABEL [*taking PRISCILLA comfortingly in her arms*]. Come, Priscilla. [HARMONY and WILLIAM PENN *cling to PRISCILLA's skirts*.]

ALDERMAN [*to ISAAC*]. Couldn't you have left him the comfort of his religion?

ISAAC [*not without sadness*]. Nay, it is the rule of the Society.

ALDERMAN. But to disown him!

JONATHAN [*regretfully*]. It was to prevent others from following the same course that an example had to be made.

PRISCILLA [*coming to them with fire*]. He is better out of the Meeting than in it. And if I did not want to give you the satisfaction, I would leave it myself, you holy saints!

MEHITABEL [*shocked*]. Priscilla, thee does not know what thee is saying. Come, children. [*The little group move toward the vestibule*.]

HARMONY [*sedately — at the vestibule door as she and MEHITABEL, PRISCILLA, and WILLIAM PENN go out*]. 'Pears to me Friends don't like war, 'cause they fight so much themselves.

JONATHAN [*holding up his hands*]. Out of the mouths of babes — ! [JONATHAN and ISAAC go out. In a few moments they and the others are seen passing by in front of the windows.]

ALDERMAN [*to JOSEPH — who is now at the centre*]. You are serving in the greatest adventure that time has ever seen, in the loftiest cause that has ever been given to man. That should be some consolation.

JOSEPH. It is. And yet my loss is great, too, Peter. [ALDERMAN turns away and walks toward the door.]

GLADIUS [*coming forward*]. When Ah was a young man in Africa, Ah toted a spear an' shield in de elephan' grass by de big rivahs. Ah was a fightin' man, too, Marse Joseph, afore de slavehs done coteh me.

JOSEPH. Thee has had sad memories, Gladius.

GLADIUS. Yassah, but when white men lak Marse Joseph gwine to fight foh black men lak me, Ah fergits all de sad mem'ries, and looks way down where Ah sees mah people free.

JOSEPH. They will be free, Gladius, if we can make them so.

GLADIUS. Kin Ah salute you, sah, lak a fightin' man? [JOSEPH bows his head, much moved. The old man raises his right hand.] Ah wishes yo' well in de battle. [He then turns and follows ALDERMAN out into the vestibule and presently they are seen passing the windows.]

[JOSEPH stands irresolute looking to the left where DAVID, CALEB and RACHEL are grouped. Then he turns to go out.]

RACHEL [*with a cry of pain*]. Don't go.

JOSEPH. Thy father and the Meeting have decreed it.

RACHEL [*turning toward her father and CALEB*]. Father, Caleb, hear me —

DAVID [*unhappily*]. Silence, daughter.

RACHEL. Thee makes me desperate. I'll go with Joseph if thee will not reinstate him.

CALEB [*gently*]. It is too late for that.

DAVID [*sadly*]. The scorn and reproach of the world and of thy people will be thine. Does thee realize that, Rachel?

RACHEL. What are they to me? Love is a woman's heritage. Thy religion, father, places vision before duty.

DAVID. What have I left but vision? My business gone, though that were the least. My boy, he who alone could perpetuate my name, dead; and he who was the hope of my heart gone the way of the Gentile hosts arrayed in battle. Thee, too, the very apple of my eye, the spirit that sustains me, deriding me,—what else have I left?

RACHEL [*close to him and speaking gently*]. Father, don't be harsh with me if I can't see as thee sees. Another duty calls me. *It is the vision I see before all — to cleave to him who is the partner of my soul until death do us part. [He shakes his head.]* I am thy daughter, father, thine own flesh and blood — I want thy consent. [*DAVID still shakes his head.*]

[*In the far distance the music of a brass band is faintly heard. Moment by moment as the scene progresses the sound swells, becoming sweeter and more distinct.*]

RACHEL [*alarmed as the faint roll of drums and the music of the fifes increases*]. That sound?

JOSEPH. Soldiers — marching to the train.

RACHEL. But thee?

JOSEPH. I do not go for a month.

RACHEL [*with a last entreaty*]. Father?

DAVID [*in refusal, yearning toward the two and rent with the struggle*]. Nay, not in sternness to thee, oh my darling, nor to Joseph, but that I may keep the faith.

RACHEL [*to JOSEPH*]. Then I will go with thee, Joseph, if thee will have me as I am, disowned by all save my love for thee.

JOSEPH [*raising her hands to his lips*]. Thy love were consolation for all the tears and hurts of this life. [*His arm supporting her, they move toward the vestibule door.*]

DAVID. First my son — now my daughter. As Job am I bereft.

CALEB [*standing by him and touching him gently on the arm*]. Time will heal thy wounds, David. The web of life is an endless surprise, for the loom takes the rough and the smooth and weaves them into a beautiful tapestry. [*Amid the music, as RACHEL and JOSEPH go out into the vestibule.*] The world is full of love, David. Waters cannot quench it nor can the floods drown it.

DAVID. Thee will stand by me?

CALEB. Ay, until the last roll is called. There will be grief-stained battlefields, but at last the end will come.

[*RACHEL and JOSEPH are now seen passing in front of the windows.*]

DAVID. And Peace? [*For answer CALEB raises his hand and points into the distance.*]

DAVID [*his face uplifted and shining as if also seeing that to which CALEB is pointing*]. Yea, the long trailing years will pass. Still dews of quietness will water the earth, and in the fulness of time the vision will come to pass.

[*As the two old men gaze out upon the vision, and JOSEPH and RACHEL pass along the street in front of the windows to the right, the band swells into the strains of the "Star Spangled Banner," and*

THE CURTAIN SLOWLY FALLS]

END OF THE PLAY

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